

**TOWN OF SWEPSONVILLE**  
**Town Plan 2040**  
**Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan**



**May 16, 2022**

**Adopted: May 16, 2022**

**Recommended by Swepsonville Planning Board: May 4, 2022**

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Town Plan 2040  
Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan***

**TOWN OF SWEPSONVILLE**

Swepsonville Town Hall  
2747 Darrell Newton Drive  
Swepsonville, NC 27253

**Adopted by the Town Council: May 16, 2022**

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# 1. WHY PLAN OUR TOWN?

The purpose of the ***Town of Swepsonville Town Plan 2040 - Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan*** (“Town Plan”) is to provide information and perspective used to pinpoint and prioritize actions to support a resilient, self-sustaining community. The Town Plan must encourage economic opportunities, while at the same time maintaining the character and resources essential to Swepsonville in a vibrant, growing urban region. An up-to-date plan balancing the changing trends, environmental mandates, and the Town’s vision is essential to the success of Swepsonville and its inhabitants. Information contained in the Town Plan should serve as the basis for both investment and future development decisions.

Swepsonville Town Plan has been designed for regular use by citizens, businesses, investors, leadership, and agencies in making decisions affecting the future of Swepsonville. This Town Plan is vital to making informed decisions that will both account for current conditions while maintaining perspective about the future when doing so. A Town Plan is the foundation of almost all capital improvement and growth decisions. ***Adoption of Town Plan 2040 is not the end; it is a consensus on where to begin!***

## 1.1 About Town Planning

Long-term planning for the future of a community is vitally important. One tool to guide the future of a community is the planning process and adoption of a comprehensive land use plan. Part of a comprehensive land use plan is designed to provide an overview of a community’s existing conditions and physical development. The main function of the plan is to serve as a guide to a community’s future development policy. The goals of a comprehensive land use plan aim to:

- involve the community in developing a long-term vision,
- address what should be maintained or changed in the future to achieve that vision,
- identify future land uses in an overall community-wide context,
- identify and prioritize needed future infrastructure improvement aimed at supporting the vision, and
- provide implementation guidance as to the private and public investment strategies to realize the vision.

Part of the on-going planning process is monitoring the plan’s progress as a fluid document. [§N.C.G.S. 160D-501](#) does not set a specific time frame for updating the comprehensive plan, but it does call for plans to be “*reasonably maintained.*” As recommended by the UNC School of Government, “*factors determining reasonableness would include rate of growth and change as well as physical, economic, and social conditions so professional practice calls for comprehensive plans to be updated every 5-10 years. If the community has experienced rapid change, then an update every five years may be more defensible.*” ***Planning is an ongoing process!***

## 1.2 Official State Policy

The State of North Carolina requires local governments in NC General Statute [160D](#) to adopt a plan to be eligible for certain funding, powers and authority by July 1, 2022. The plan is to be used as an assurance to the public that local decisions are made with a perspective on the future

implications of pending decisions, and to affirm that public accountability and fiscal responsibility are considered as part of the decision-making process.

Decisions made about public spending and growth can often appear centered around individuals involved and how they may benefit. When governing board decisions adhere to an adopted plan, those individual interests are balanced with others affected by the outcome of decisions, which include citizens, property owners, and businesses.

### **1.3 Statutory Reference**

***Town of Swepsonville Town Plan 2040 - Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan*** shall serve as the adopted plan pursuant to [§N.C.G.S. 160D](#) in the planning and regulation of development.

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## 2. ABOUT SWEPSONVILLE

### 2.1 Town of Swepsonville Background

#### 2.1.1 Location

The Town of Swepsonville, North Carolina is in central Alamance County, between the cities of Graham to the north and Saxapahaw to the south. The county seat is the City of Graham. The Town's corporate limits encompasses approximately 1.4 square miles of land.

Hospitals in proximity to the Town include: Cone Health Alamance Regional Medical Center, located 10 miles west in Burlington; UNC Hospitals-Hillsborough Campus, located 18 miles east, in Hillsborough; and the world-renowned academic Duke University Hospital, located less than 27 miles east, in Durham.

The Town of Swepsonville is located in the Burlington NC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which the U.S. Census Bureau estimated had a population of 171,346 in 2020. Swepsonville is also within the larger geographic boundary of the Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point Combined Statistical Area (CSA), which had an estimated population of 1.7 million in 2020 as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. The region's population has increased in recent decades and is projected to continue within the next 20 to 30 years.

#### 2.1.2 History

The Town was named after a businessman named George William Swepson, who in 1868, built and owned a cotton mill on the western side of Town. As published in the Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, edited by William S. Powell, UNC Press, Swepson became involved in a \$4 million dollar railroad fraud after the Civil War.



### 3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The development of a Town Plan first requires that identification and analysis of certain key growth factors be performed. The intent of the analysis is to ensure that policies contained in the Town Plan address current problems, trends, and issues facing the community, including the immediate area. The key growth factors included for analysis are discussed in several subject areas within the Town Plan. Collectively, these key growth factors summarize past and present conditions, while providing the essential yardsticks for estimating future conditions.

The U.S. Census Bureau prepares a detailed statistical portrait for local governments, counties and states of their respective social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics through the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) products. The ACS 5-year estimates are constructed as period estimates and reflect the average characteristics over the five year period. In general, unless a user knows how the estimate for each characteristic is trending over time, it is not accurate to consider the 5-year estimate as an estimate at any given point within the 5 year period. However, under certain conditions, the ACS estimates can serve as a proxy. Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau *2015-2019 American Community Survey*, released on December 10, 2020, were used in several instances in developing the Community Profile for the Town of Swepsonville, as detailed in this section. Rather than refer to the 5 year period (2015-2019) throughout the narrative in this section, the last year of 2019, will be used for brevity, but the full five year period will be noted as the source for tables and charts. On November 10, 2021, the U.S. Census issued a press release that the Bureau must delay the 2016-2020 ACS 5-year data release originally targeted for December 2021. Additional time is needed to continue refining their methodology so that they can minimize the impact of nonresponse bias due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In their methodology of defining what is a current residence in the American Community Survey, the U.S. Census Bureau considers everyone who is currently living or staying at an address for more than two months is considered a current resident of that address. This means that their expected length of stay is more than two months, not that they have been staying in the housing unit for more than two months at the time when the survey is conducted. Persons away from their residence for two months or less, whether in the United States or overseas, on a vacation or on a business trip, are considered to still be a resident at the address, and the unit is classified as occupied and eligible for inclusion in the survey. Persons away from their residence for more than two months are considered not to be a resident. For the ACS, if no one is determined to be a current resident in the sampled housing unit, it is classified as vacant.

Data contained with this element is derived from two (2) sources:

1. The 2020 Decennial Census; and
2. The 2019 American Community Survey (ACS).

In those instances where actual Decennial Census data is still not yet available, this Document utilizes ACS data. It is important to understand the differences between these two data sources:

- Decennial Census data represents a ‘physical count’ of all residents occurring every ten years;
- American Community Survey (ACS) produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates based on data samples (i.e. does not represent a physical county of all residents). Data is collected on either a monthly or annual (i.e. yearly) basis.

Due to the COVID pandemic, the US Census Bureau experienced challenges in securing full participation in the Decennial Census. There are noticeable discrepancies in some data sets, most notably population, from Census and ACS data. In completing this Document, the best available data was utilized. In those cases where a disparity exists, steps have been taken to try and document those differences and provide an explanation.

### 3.1 Population

#### 3.1.1 Population Growth

The U.S. Census Bureau’s Decennial census for Town of Swepsonville in 2010 was 1,154 person and the Bureau’s 2020 estimate was 2,254 persons<sup>1</sup>, an increase of approximately 95%.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were 909 households in the Town of Swepsonville for 2019 with an average household size of owner-occupied houses of 2.49 people and with an average household size of renter-occupied houses of 2.62 people. Households include related family members, non-related individuals and people living alone. The count of households excludes group quarters. Section 3.1 provides figures within the Town of Swepsonville town limits using U.S. Census Bureau figures.

The population of the Town of Swepsonville decreased between 1990 and 2000, and then increased between 2000 to 2020 as illustrated in Table 3.1.1A and Figure 3.1.1.A.

**Table 3.1.1.A: Town of Swepsonville Population Estimates and Growth Rates**

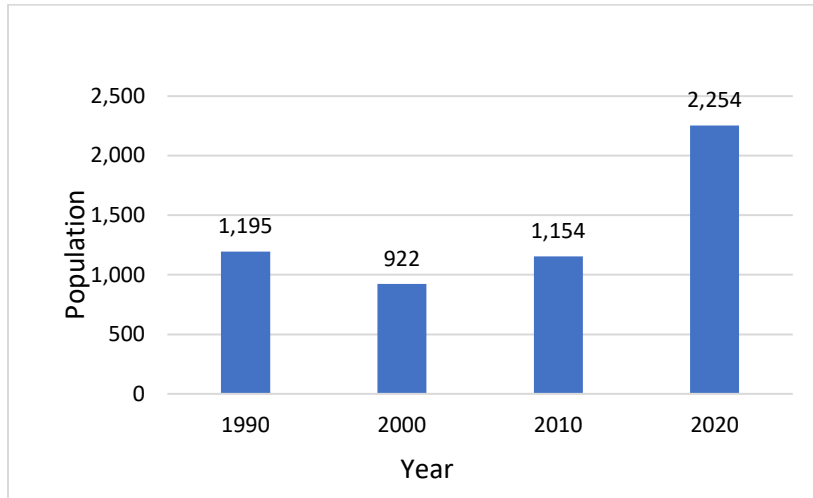
Year	Town of Swepsonville Population	Swepsonville Population Annual Increases/Decreases	Between Years
1990	1,195		
2000	922	-22%	1990-2000
2010	1,154	25%	2000-2010
2020	2,254	95%	2010-2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>1</sup> The North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) State Demographer estimates the Town’s population for 2020 is 2,453. This is an estimate from the State Demographers office and does not constitute an official certification. For purposes of this document, we are utilizing the certified US Decennial Census population figures.

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**Figure 3.1.1.A: Town of Swepsonville Decennial Population Estimates**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3.1.1.B illustrates the percentage of Swepsonville population to the total population of Alamance County throughout the past 20 years has remained stable.

**Table 3.1.1.B: Town of Swepsonville to Alamance County Population Comparison**

Year	Swepsonville	Alamance County	Swepsonville's Population to Alamance County's Population
2000	922	130,800	0.7%
2010	1,154	151,131	0.8%
2020	2,254	171,346	1.31%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The population estimates for each year between 2010 to 2020 have been estimated annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. As illustrated in Table 3.1.1.C and Figure 3.1.1.B, the population has, for the most part, increased in the last decade. 2013 saw a sharp drop in population, 15.2% estimated drop, with steady increased beginning in 2014 through 2020.

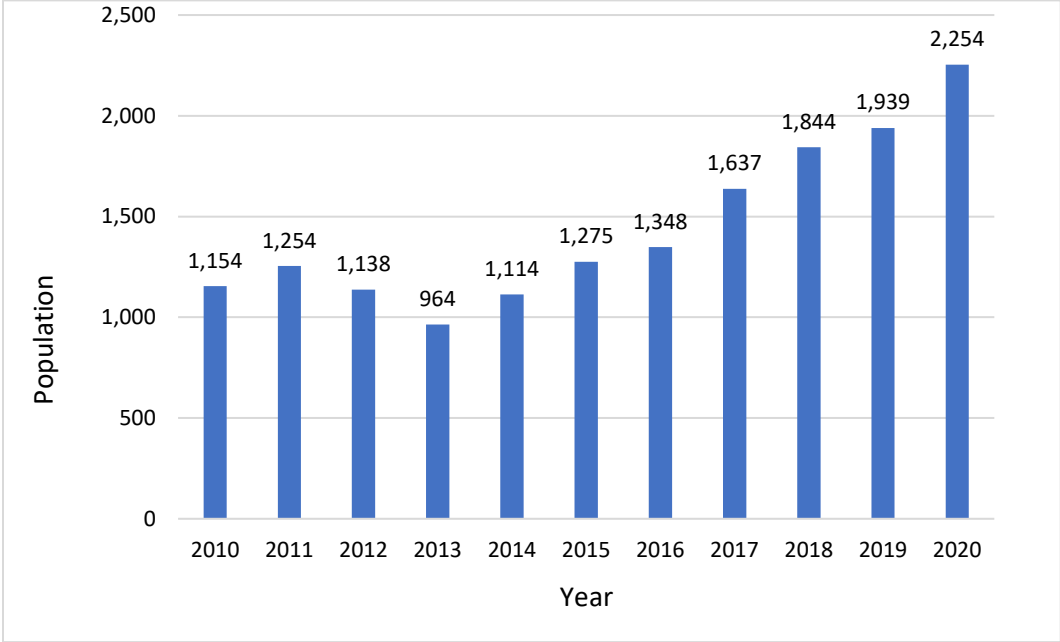
The average rate of population increase between 2010 and 2020, based on population estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, was 7.53% (refer to Table 3.1.1.C and Figure 3.1.1.B).

**Table 3.1.1.C: Town of Swepsonville Population - Annual Estimates and Growth Rates**

Year	Population	Growth Rates
2010	1,154	
2011	1,254	8.67%
2012	1,138	-9.25%
2013	964	-15.29%
2014	1,114	15.56%
2015	1,275	14.45%
2016	1,348	5.73%
2017	1,637	21.44%
2018	1,844	12.65%
2019	1,939	5.15%
2020	2,254	16.25%
	Average Growth Rate	7.53%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Figure 3.1.1.B: Town of Swepsonville Population - Annual Estimates**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates

**3.1.2 Population Projections**

Rather than apply an average 2010 through 2020 average population increase rate of 7.53% to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau’s population estimate of 2,254 persons and subsequent years to forecast Swepsonville’s population in 2030 and 2040, which may lead to unrealistic high projection, another method was used.

The North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) State Demographer publishes population projections annually for each county using complex methodology tailored to each county’s birth, death, and migration rates.

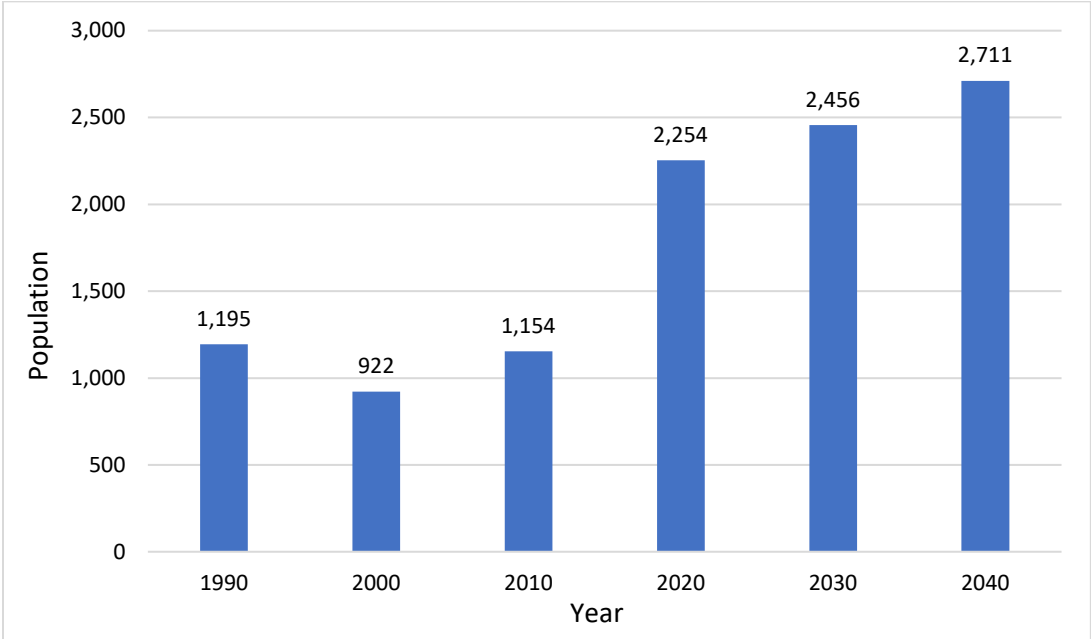
Since the Town of Swepsonville population, on average, has been approximately 1.3% of Alamance County’s total population, 1.3% was applied to the State Demographer population projections for 2030 and 2040 in Alamance County to forecast projections of population for the Town. This results in a population projection for the Town of 2,456 persons in year for 2030 and 2,711 persons in year 2040 as illustrated in Table 3.1.2 and Figure 3.1.2.

**Table 3.1.2: Town of Swepsonville Population – Estimates and Projections**

Year	Population Estimates and Projections
1990	1,195
2000	922
2010	1,154
2020	2,254
2030	2,456
2040	2,711

Sources: 2020 Estimate: US Census  
 2030 & 2040 Projections: Average population percentage of Swepsonville to Alamance County’s population (1.3%) using the NC OSBM population projections for Alamance County

**Figure 3.1.2: Town of Swepsonville Population Estimates and Projections**



Sources: 2020 Estimate: US Census  
 2030 & 2040 Projections: Average population percentage of Swepsonville to Alamance County’s population (1.3%) using the NC OSBM population projections for Alamance County

### 3.1.3 Diversity

Within the Town of Swepsonville, for residents reporting one race alone, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015-2019 American Community Survey estimates 82.7% were White; 12.0% were Black or African American; 0% were American Indian and Alaska Native; 2.0% were Asian; 0% were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 0.4% were some other race.

**Table 3.1.3.A: Town of Swepsonville Population by Race Alone**

Race or Ethnicity	Percent Total Population
White	82.7%
African American	12.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0%
Asian	2.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%
Some Other Race	0.4%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, Margin of error does not always equal 100%*

The 2015-2019 American Community Survey estimated 75.2% of people in Swepsonville were White non-Hispanic. People of Hispanic origin may be of any race. An estimated 2.9% of residents reported two or more races.

### 3.1.4 Population by Age and Sex

The 2015-2019 American Community Survey estimated genders in Swepsonville in 2019 were 50.7% females and 49.3% males. Median age is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the measure that divides the age distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median value and one-half of the cases falling above the median value. The median age in 2019 was 40.2 years. An estimated 20.2% of the population was under 18 years, 39.8% was 18 to 44 years, 24.0% was 45 to 64 years, and 15.9% was 65 years and older.

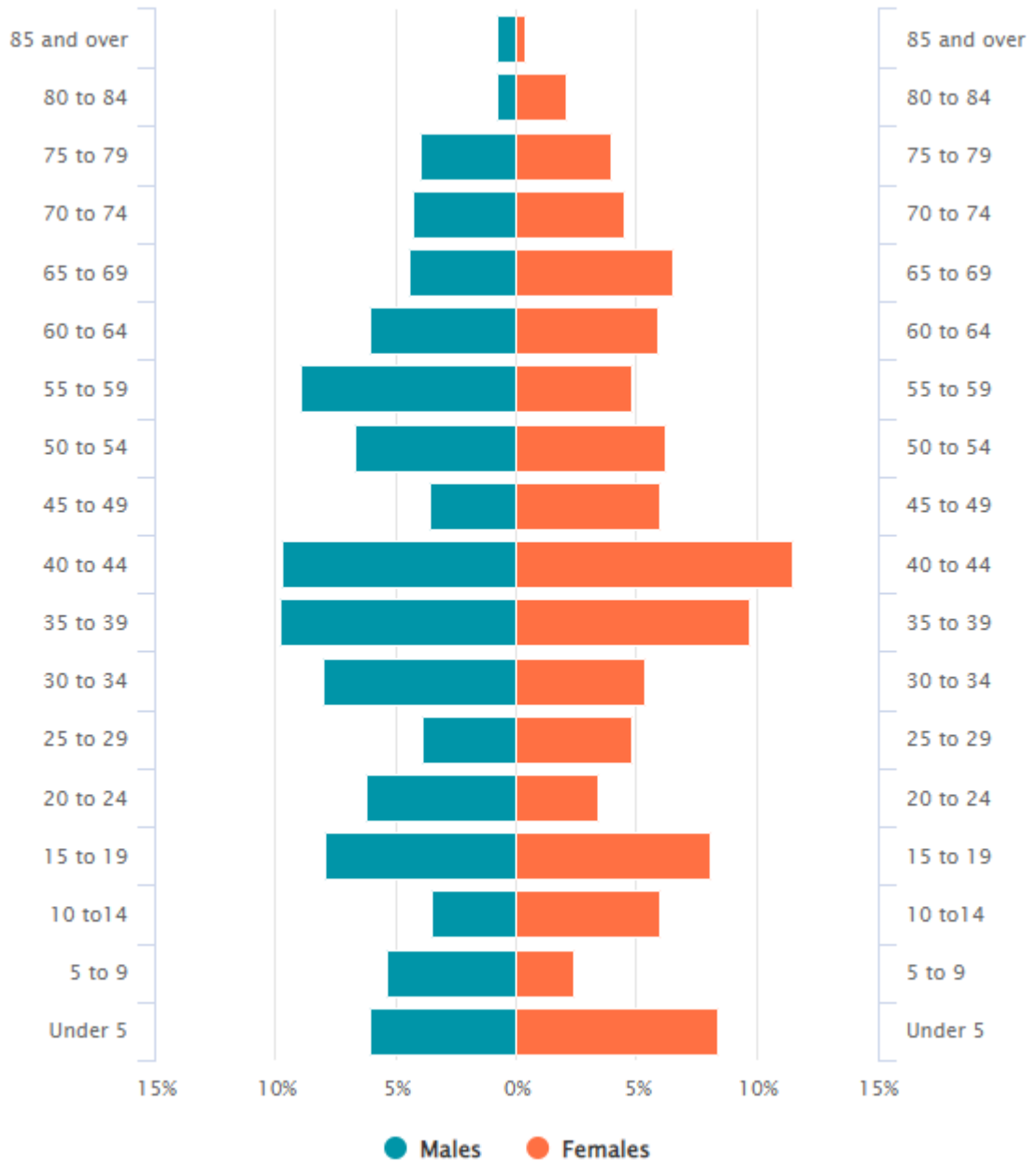
**Table 3.1.4: Town of Swepsonville Population by Age and Sex**

Age	Percent Male	Percent Female
Under 5	6.1	8.4
5 to 9	5.4	2.4
10 to 14	3.5	6.0
15 to 19	7.9	8.1
20 to 24	6.2	3.4
25 to 29	3.9	4.8
30 to 34	8.0	5.4
35 to 39	9.8	9.7
40 to 44	9.7	11.5
45 to 49	3.6	6.0
50 to 54	6.7	6.2
55 to 59	8.9	4.8
60 to 64	6.1	5.9
65 to 69	4.4	6.5

Age	Percent Male	Percent Female
70 to 74	4.3	4.5
75 to 79	4.0	4.0
80 to 84	0.8	2.1
85 and over	0.8	0.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### Town of Swepsonville Population by Age and Sex



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

## 3.2 Housing

### 3.2.1 Occupied Housing Characteristics

As previously indicated, in 2020 Swepsonville had 909 housing units of which 900 housing units were occupied or had people living in them, while the remaining 9 units were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, the percentage of these houses were occupied by owners (also known as the homeownership rate) was 87.3% while renters occupied 12.7%. The average household size of owner-occupied houses was 2.49 and in renter-occupied houses it was 2.62.



**Table 3.2.1.A: Homeownership Rates**

Jurisdiction	% of Owner Occupied Units	% of Renter Occupied Units
Town of Swepsonville	87.3%	12.7%
Alamance County	65.2%	34.8%
State of North Carolina	65.2%	34.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

In 2019, the median property value for owner-occupied houses in Swepsonville was \$209,300.00. Of the owner-occupied households, 80.9% had a mortgage and 19.1% owned their houses free and clear. The median monthly housing costs for owners with a mortgage was \$1,350 and for owners without a mortgage it was \$400. For renter-occupied houses, the median gross rent for Swepsonville was \$810. Gross rent includes the monthly contract rent and any monthly payments made for electricity, gas, water and sewer, and any other fuels to heat the house.

Households that pay 30% or more of their income on housing costs are considered cost-burdened. As illustrated in Table 3.2.1.B, in 2019, cost-burdened households in

Swepsonville accounted for 27.8% of owners with a mortgage, 11.6% of owners without a mortgage, and 16% of renters.

**Table 3.2.1.B: Swepsonville Occupants with a Housing Burden in 2019**

House Value	Percent
Owners with mortgage	27.8%
Owners without mortgage	11.6%
Renters	16%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.2.2 Housing Stock

In 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated 452 (49.7%) occupied residential structures in the Town of Swepsonville have been built since 2000. These figures do not account for houses built since 2019.

**Table 3.2.2: Town of Swepsonville Occupied Housing Units by Age in 2019**

Year Built	Number Structures	Percent Structures
Built 2014 or later	268	29.5%
Built 2010 to 2013	62	6.8%
Built 2000 to 2009	122	13.4%
Built 1990 to 1999	60	6.6%
Built 1980 to 1989	100	11.0%
Built 1970 to 1979	69	7.6%
Built 1960 to 1969	45	5.0%
Built 1950 to 1959	34	3.7%
Built 1940 to 1949	34	3.7%
Built 1939 or earlier	115	12.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.2.3 Housing Types

As of 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Swepsonville had a total of 909 housing units. Of these housing units, 88.8% were single-family houses; 5.4% were multi-family structures (buildings that contained two or more units); and 5.8% were mobile homes.

**Table 3.2.2: Town of Swepsonville Housing Types**

Housing Types	%
Single Family (Site Built)	88.8%
Mobile Homes	5.4%
Multi-family	5.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.3 Economy

#### 3.3.1 Household Income

Household income calculations consist of the income of all individuals aged 16 years and older in the household. When analyzing the distribution of household income in the Town of Swepsonville, most households fall into the \$100,000-\$149,999 income range (21.7%), followed by the \$35,000-\$49,999 (18.7%) and \$50,000 -\$74,999 (18.1%) range. Refer to Table 3.3.1.

**Table 3.3.1: Town of Swepsonville Household Income by Range**

Income Range	% of Total Population
Less than \$10,000	1.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	5.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.5%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	18.1%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	21.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.7%
\$200,000 or more	1.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

#### 3.3.2 Median Household Income

Median income is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the amount obtained by dividing the total income of a particular statistical universe by the number of units in that universe. The median income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. Mean income is the amount obtained by dividing the total aggregate income of a group by the number of units in that group. The mean or average income is higher than median income. The median household income in the Town of Swepsonville was \$44,861 per year. The Town of Swepsonville’s median household income is below that of the State of North Carolina and Alamance County as illustrated in Table 3.3.2.

**Table 3.3.2: Median Income Comparison**

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income
Town of Swepsonville	\$44,861
Alamance County	\$49,688
State of North Carolina	\$54,602

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.3.3 Poverty Rates

The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If the total income for a family, or unrelated individual, falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family (and every individual in it) or unrelated individual is considered in poverty. Since poverty is determined by the circumstances of individual families (e.g., family size, income thresholds and income), there is no single poverty rate for an entire jurisdiction or geographic area.

As Table 3.3.3 illustrates, the percentage of people in poverty, as well as the percent of children in poverty, in the Town of Swepsonville significantly lower than for Alamance County and for the State of North Carolina. The US Census Bureau reported a 0% estimate for children under 18 years old in poverty in Swepsonville and less than 3% for all people.

**Table 3.3.3: Poverty Level Comparison**

Jurisdiction	% of People in Poverty	% of Children (under 18 years Old) in Poverty
Town of Swepsonville	2.7%	0%
Alamance County	16.1%	24.8%
State of North Carolina	14.7%	21.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

## 3.4 Education

### 3.4.1 Educational Attainment

Of Swepsonville residents 25 years and older, 23.5% of residents aged 25 years and over had at least a high school education or equivalent in 2019 and 30.9% had a bachelor's degree or higher. An estimated 9.8% did not complete high school which is lower than the County and State percentage.

Swepsonville's percentage of people with a bachelor's degree fell in between that of Alamance County and the State of North Carolina while having a higher percentage of graduate or professional degrees than both the County and State as illustrated in Table 3.4.1.

The total school enrollment, age 3 years and over, in Swepsonville was 396 in 2019. Nursery school enrollment was 20 and kindergarten through 12th grade enrollment was 32. College or graduate school enrollment was 109.

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**Table 3.4.1: Educational Attainment Comparison for Population Aged 25 and Over**

Educational Attainment	Town of Swepsonville	Alamance County	State of North Carolina
Less than high school diploma	9.8%	13.7%	12.2%
High school diploma or equivalency	23.5%	27.7%	25.7%
Some college, no degree	24.7%	23.4%	21.2%
Associate's degree	11.2%	10.5%	9.7%
Bachelor's degree	18.1%	17.4%	20.0%
Graduate or professional degree	12.8%	7.5%	11.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

**3.4.2 Public Schools**

Residents of Swepsonville are served by the Alamance-Burlington School System. Depending on where children reside within the community, they may attend the following schools:

- Alexander-Alamance Elementary School is located at 2518 NC-54 in Haw River, offers pre-K through grade 5.
- Hawfields Middle School is located at 1951 South NC Highway 119 in Mebane, offers grades 6 through 8.
- Graham High School is located at 903 Trollinger Rd. in Graham, offers grades 9 through 12.
- Southern Alamance High School is located at 631 Southern Alliance High School Rd. in Graham, offers grades 9 through 12.

**3.4.3 Colleges and Universities**

Swepsonville is conveniently located in proximity to the following college and universities.

[Alamance Community College \(ACC\)](#) is a public community college located 4 miles north of Swepsonville in Graham. ACC prepares students for specialty career fields including, but not limited to Mechatronics, Nursing, Accounting, and Criminal Justice.



*Left: Alamance Community College, Photo Credit: Clark Nexsen*

*Right: Elon University, Photo Credit: Alamance County Visitors Bureau*

Elon University is located 15 miles northwest of Swepsonville. Elon is a mid-sized private university renowned as a national model for engaged and experiential learning. The curriculum is grounded in the traditional liberal arts and sciences and complemented by nationally accredited professional and graduate programs.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNC-G) is located 27 miles west of Swepsonville. UNC-G is a public research university and is part of the University of North Carolina system. The university offers more than 100 undergraduate, 61 master's and 26 doctoral programs.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is in Chapel Hill, 22 miles east of Swepsonville. The first public university in North Carolina, it opened its doors to students in 1795, making it one of the three oldest public universities in the U.S.

Duke University is in Durham, 27 miles east of Swepsonville. It is a private university having been founded by the Methodists and Quakers in 1838. The renowned Duke Chapel is located on the Durham campus.

North Carolina Central University is in Durham, 31 miles east of Swepsonville. NCCU is a public, historically black university and has been part of the University of North Carolina system since 1972 and offers programs at the baccalaureate, master's, professional and doctoral levels.

North Carolina State University is in Raleigh, 51 miles southeast of Swepsonville. It is a public university and part of the University of North Carolina system. With enrollment of 34,000 students, it is the largest in the state university system from an enrollment perspective.

## **3.5 Workforce**

### **3.5.1 Employment**

In Swepsonville, the U.S. Census reported that in 2019, 66.7% percent of the population age 16 and over were employed while 31.5% were not employed. An estimated 78.3% of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 17.9% were federal, state, or local government workers; and 3.5% were self-employed in their own business.

As presented in Table 3.5.1.A, the largest number of the Town's citizens in the workforce (aged 16+) are employed in the management, business, sciences, and arts occupations (357 people, or 34.0% of the 1,050-member workforce). The second most numerous categories are sales and office occupations (246 people, or 23.4%).

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**Table 3.5.1.A: Occupations for Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over**

Occupation	Number	%
Management, business, sciences, and arts occupations	357	34.0%
Service occupations	240	22.9%
Sales and office occupations	246	23.4%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	110	10.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	97	9.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

In 2019, the civilian employed population in Swepsonville, aged 16 years and older, worked in the following industries.

**Table 3.5.1.B: Employment by Industry**

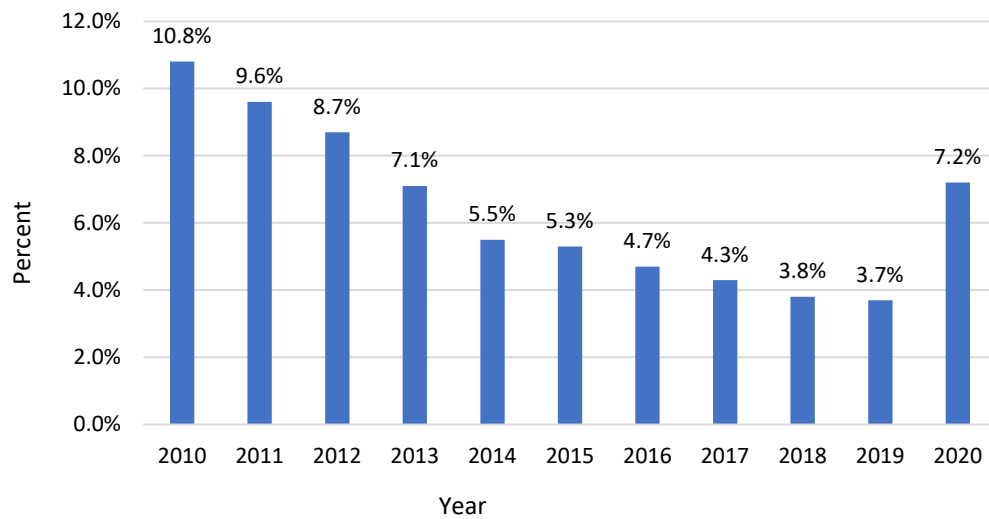
Industry	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.4%
Construction	9.1%
Manufacturing	7.4%
Wholesale trade	1.3%
Retail trade	6.8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.1%
Information	2.0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	35.5%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation, and food services	9.0%
Other Services, except public administration	4.2%
Public administration	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.5.2 Unemployment

Unemployment rates in Alamance County have shown a steady downward trend from 10.8% in 2010 to 3.7% in 2019, but then jumped up to 7.2% in 2020, likely due to the impacts of the COVID global pandemic. These improvements demonstrate Alamance County managed to rebound from the great recession, up until COVID impacts. Labor statistics specifically for Swepsonville are not available through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Table 3.5.2: Unemployment in Alamance County, 2010-2020**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

### 3.5.3 Commuting Patterns

As reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 84.6 percent of Swepsonville workers drove to work alone in 2014-2018 and 9.3 percent carpoolled. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 27.0 minutes to get to work. Table 3.5.3 presents Swepsonville workers’ modes of travel to work.

**Table 3.5.3: Town of Swepsonville Commuters’ Methods of Transportation**

Transportation Method	% of All Workers
Drive Alone	84.6%
Carpool	9.3%
Public Transportation	0%
Walk	0.8%
Other Means	0.4%
Worked at Home	5.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey

## 3.6 Future Trends Projection - *How does Swepsonville prepare?*

Recognizing trends and how market dynamics can and do change, will enable Swepsonville to position itself as a welcoming community for multiple generations looking at buying or renting a home, starting or growing a business, and finding Swepsonville a good place to visit. This approach to planning reinforces the community’s desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging community members will choose to remain. A vibrant and sustainable community is one where both the new and existing home markets are attractive to

future generations and allow for aging members of the community to remain in the community by offering a variety of housing products near jobs, services and events.

According to contemporary real estate experts, the “50+” real estate market is changing. In these next few years, Generation X (those born between the years 1964 and 1977) will be joining the Boomers (born between 1946 and 1963) and Matures (between 1927 and 1945), making serving the age 50+ market both a challenging puzzle as well as an opportunity for both communities and the real estate industry itself.

A recent insightful online posting on RISmedia.com (a real estate trade site) states: “For the **Mature** buyers, those born between the years 1927 and 1945, the decision to move can be an emotional and complicated process. The sense of obligation to the family home may be a burden and a comfort at the same time.” The posting goes on to state: “**Baby Boomers** are savvy home buyers. They approach the transaction with high expectations and confidence. They consider the home a reflection of their lifestyle, so image and status are important. Whether they are downsizing, upsizing, or purchasing a second home, vacation home, or investment property, they know what they want and how to tell you about it.” And finally, the post states: “Newbies to the 50+ group, **Generation X** stands out because of their strong need for independence and practical yet cautious approach. They take on the responsibility of gathering information and rely strongly on facts and documentation. They ask a lot of questions and don’t want to get burned. They expect their home to complement their lifestyle and not the other way around.”

Preparations to embrace current and projected trends are a partnership of land development and real estate industries with local government leadership. New housing construction should address gaps in the market product offering; therefore, land development specifications appearing in the Town’s ordinances must be adequate to accommodate these trends. Replacing the town’s antiquated zoning ordinance, adding specifications for land development which creates new streets and supporting infrastructure, and maintaining quality control over the implementation of these standards must be prioritized to protect property rights of all parties while creating common-sense opportunities that don’t setup for failures in the future.

As with the housing markets, ever changing trends in consumption, product development, technology and generational shifts in personal choices/values must be considered when making decisions about commercial and other non-residential growth. This approach to planning reinforces the community’s desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging members will choose to remain. A community, where traditional values accompany craftsmanship must embrace the presence of technology in everyday life, commerce, and business. Innovation is an ever-increasing component of the economy at all levels; therefore, it must be considered in the formation of growth policy serving these innovators if we are to adapt and survive global influence on everyday life. *(Also see Sections 6 and 8 of this document).*

# 4. NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

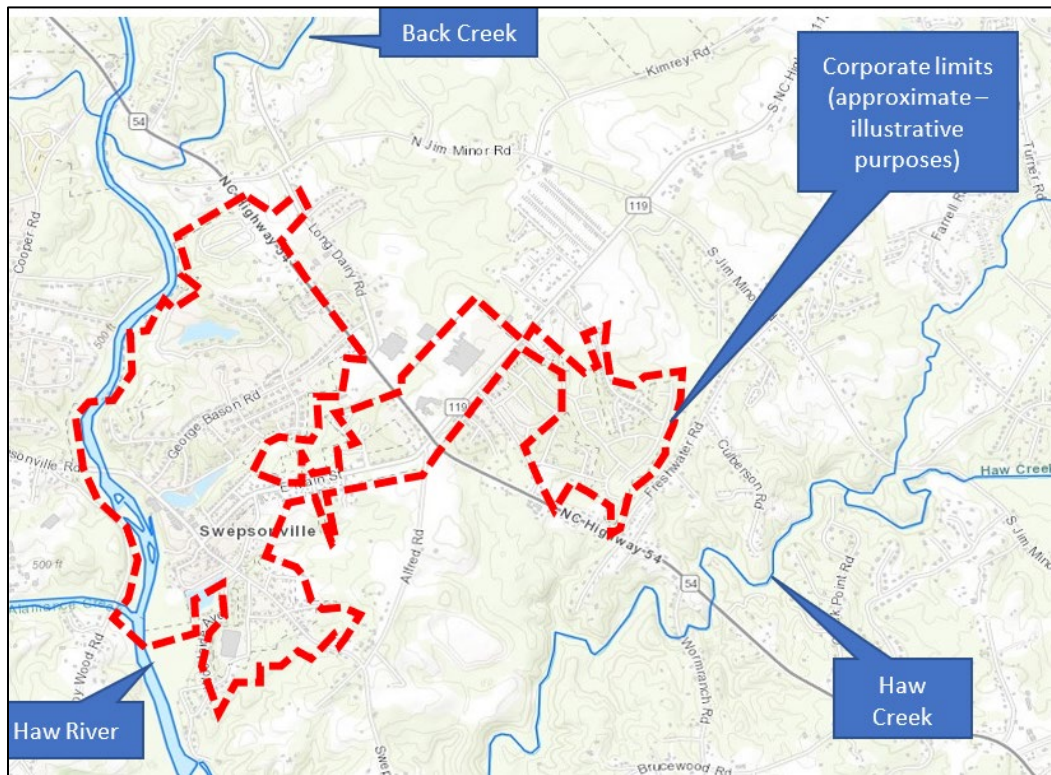
## 4.1 Natural Resources

### 4.1.1 Water Resources

Water resources provide both recreational and life sustaining resources for the Town of and the region. The Town of Swepsonville is bordered by the following water bodies:

Stream Name:	State Description	State Classification
Back Creek – North of Town (outside corporate limits)	From dam at Graham-Mebane Reservoir to Haw River	WS-V; NSW
Haw Creek – East and South of Town (outside corporate limits)	From N. C. Hwy. 54 to Haw River (including the proposed reservoir below normal reservoir elevation)	WS-V; NSW
Haw River – West of Town (both within and outside of corporate limits)	From a point 0.1 mile upstream of SR2712 to a point 0.4 mile downstream of Cane Creek (South side of Haw River)	WS-V; NSW

See map below for more detail on water feature location(s):



Source: NC State Department of Environmental Quality

There are several unnamed ponds within the community that are not classified by the State. As detailed herein, identified waterways are predominately classified by the State of North Carolina Division of Water Resources (DWR) as *Water Supply V (WS-V)* water features, defined as follows:

*WS-V waterways: Waters protected as water supplies which are generally upstream and draining to Class WS-IV waters or waters used by industry to supply their employees with drinking water or as waters formerly used as water supply. These waters are also protected for Class C uses.*

Class C Waters are defined by the State as follows: *Waters protected for uses such as secondary recreation, fishing, wildlife, fish consumption, aquatic life including propagation, survival and maintenance of biological integrity, and agriculture. Secondary recreation includes wading, boating, and other uses involving human body contact with water where such activities take place in an infrequent, unorganized, or incidental manner.*



Source: Google Maps

These water features are further classified by the State as a ‘*Nutrient Sensitive Water (NSW)*’ intended to identify water features: *needing additional nutrient management due to being subject to excessive growths of microscopic or macroscopic vegetation.* The water features in and around the Town carry the NSW designation meaning there are development guidelines/constraints that shall be observed to ensure the continued viability of the feature.

Another significant regional water source is Graham-Mebane Lake, approximately 8.8 miles from the Town, serving as a 650-acre municipal reservoir.

Formerly known as Quaker Lake, the Lake was expanded from 150 acres to its' present size in 1994. Back Creek and four other creeks feed into the lake.

The lake's primary purpose is as a source of drinking water for local municipalities and a source for limited recreational opportunities.

For more information on recreational opportunities, refer to Section 4.1.1.1 of this Document.

**CAPE FEAR RIVER BASIN:**

The Town, and all of Alamance County, are located within the Cape Fear River Basin (hereafter 'the Basin').



The Basin, one of four entirely contained within North Carolina's borders, is approximately 200 miles long, has approximately 9,200 square miles of drainage area and 68,884 acres of water draining the middle portion of the State.

Over two million people, more than one third of North Carolina's population, live within the Basin, encompassing all or portions of 26 counties and approximately 115 municipalities including Greensboro, High Point, Burlington, Durham, Fayetteville and Wilmington. The Basin is the only major river basin in North Carolina to empty directly into the Atlantic Ocean.

The basin contains 6 Subbasins areas and is composed of five major drainages:

- Haw River,
- Deep River,
- Northeast Cape Fear River,
- Black River and
- The Cape Fear River.

The Town is 'split' into three sub-basins:

- Boyds Creek-Haw River,
- Haw Creek, and
- Lower Back Creek.

**CAPE FEAR RIVER:** The Basin takes its name from the Cape Fear River, formed at the confluence of the Haw River and the Deep River near the town of Moncure, NC. At Wilmington, it receives the Northeast Cape Fear River and Brunswick River, turns south, widening as an estuary and entering the Atlantic approximately 3 miles west of Cape Fear. The river ends in 32,000 acres of estuary near Southport, NC.

As indicated in this Section, the river has a direct connection to the Atlantic Ocean. This connection was, and continues to be, important for the movement of local goods for shipment overseas. Over time, the river was dredged and channelized, and locks and dams were constructed to facilitate commercial navigation. Large industries lining the lower Cape Fear makes the Basin North Carolina's most industrialized.

These activities have resulted in impacts to the fisheries of the Cape Fear River, which once supported thriving stocks of migratory American shad, river herring, sturgeon and striped bass. Fertilizers and animal waste in stormwater runoff from lawns, urban developed areas, farm fields and livestock operations, increases the flow of nutrients into nearby waters which makes water unsuitable for various aquatic species.

From a recreational perspective, and while not within Town corporate limits or Alamance County, the Cape Fear River is host to a regional recreational amenity, namely the East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile pedestrian and bicycle route between Maine and Florida running along the river.

**WATERSHED REGULATIONS:** Originally adopted in 1987, and last amended in 2018, Alamance County's Watershed Protection Ordinance protects County watershed areas by limiting development in those defined environmentally sensitive areas to reduce pollution and the cost of water treatment. Regulations include land use restrictions, density and built-upon limits, and riparian buffer requirements.

#### **4.1.1.1 Water Sports**

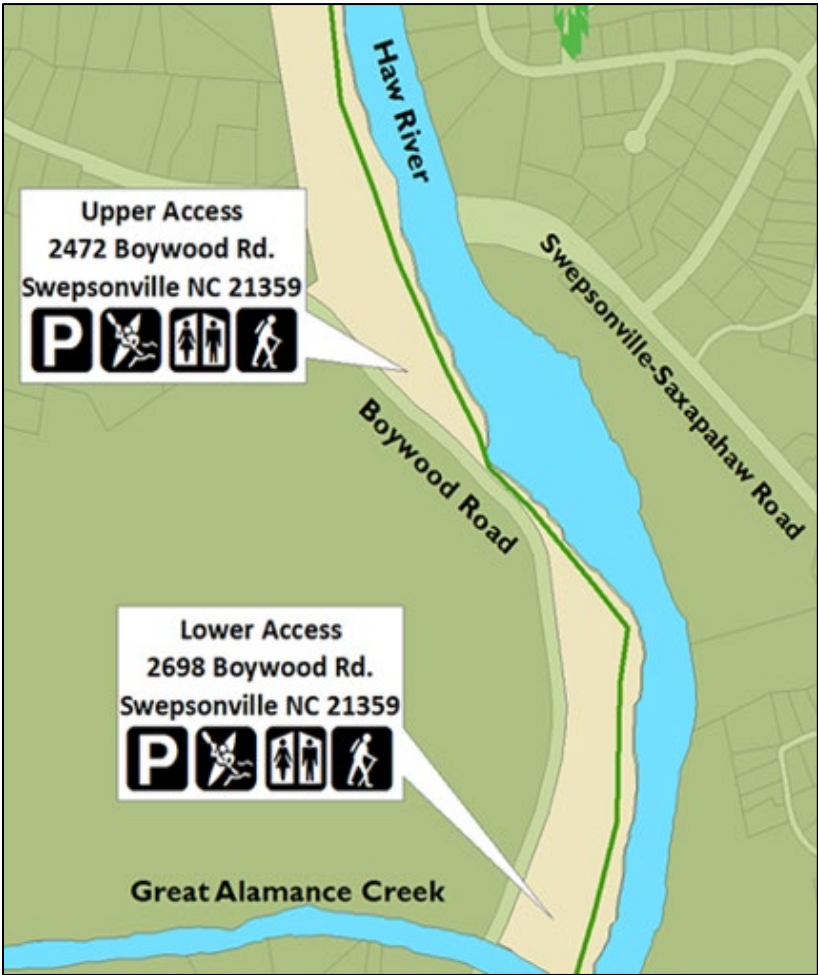
Outdoor water sport opportunities are available in the Town of Swepsonville, as well as at the region as a whole.

[Swepsonville River Park](#), located at 2472 Boy Wood Road, is a 30-acre park facility partially located within the corporate limits of the Town.

Operated by the County, it was one of the first recreation sites developed along on the Haw River and included development of an intricate greenway/trail system.

The park has the distinction of protecting over a mile of riverfront, and one of the most historically important river crossings in the county.

The park offers nearly two miles of walking trails, fishing and boating opportunities, and picnicking. Boating activities include the Haw River Paddle Trail, offering paddling to novices and expert paddlers with 14 paddle launch points. There are, in actuality, multiple access points to paddle trail along the entire length of the Haw River throughout Alamance County. The park also serves as an access point to the State's Mountain to the Sea Trail (MST).



There are two entrances to the park in Swepsonville. The upper entrance allows access to the take-out for paddlers coming downstream from Haw River and Graham. The lower entrance provides a put-in for paddlers heading downstream to Saxapahaw or paddling up Great Alamance Creek.

Of historic significance, just downstream from the upper parking lot is the remnant of an old dam. The first mill at this site was constructed by John Armstrong around 1760. The

site was purchased by Senator Archibald DeBow Murphey in 1804 and later by Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin. Ruffin’s financial trouble led to the sale of the property at sheriff’s auction to George W. Swepson. In 1868, Swepson began Falls Neuse Manufacturing Company on the east bank of the river. Swepson used mule-drawn and poled barges to transfer goods to the mills in Haw River. The complex eventually became Virginia Cotton Mills and remained until the mill closed in 1970. It was destroyed by fire in 1989.

In addition to this facility, the following additional ‘water sport’ access sites are located within the region and accessible to Town residents:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Distance from Swepsonville, NC</b>	<b>Services:</b>
Saxapahaw Lake Paddle Access - 6096 Jordan Drive, Graham, NC	6.1 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddle boat/kayak access (part of the Haw River trail system);</li> <li>• Fishing</li> </ul>
Haw River Canoe & Kayak Company	6.4 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kayak and boat rental services/water access</li> </ul>
Town and Country Nature Park - 2999 Regent Park Ln, Burlington, NC	8.5 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddle boat/kayak access (part of the Haw River trail system);</li> <li>• Fishing</li> </ul>
Graham-Mebane Lake - 3218 Bason Rd, Mebane, NC <sup>2</sup>	8.8 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch (kayak/canoe &amp; electric motor boats only) including kayak, canoe, and jon-boat rentals</li> <li>• Skiing</li> </ul>
Stoney Creek 1785 Faulkner Dr. Burlington, NC <sup>3</sup>	11 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch (kayak/canoe &amp; electric motor boats only)</li> <li>• Rowboat rentals</li> <li>• Haw River Hiking Trail Access (open daily, all year, trailhead parking available outside marina gates).</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The Lake’s primary purpose is a source of drinking water for the citizens of Graham, Mebane, Green Level, and Swepsonville. Swimming is prohibited.

<sup>3</sup> As of the writing of this Document, the Stoney Creek Marina is temporarily closed.

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Distance from Swepsonville</b>	<b>• Services:</b>
Great Bend Park - 350 Greenwood Dr, Burlington, NC	12 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddle boat/kayak access (part of the Haw River trail system);</li> <li>• Fishing</li> </ul>
Lake Mackintosh 2704 Huffman Mill Rd. Burlington, NC	12.6 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch ramp</li> <li>• Kayak &amp; rowboat rentals</li> </ul>
Shallow Ford Paddle Access – Burlington, NC	13 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• • Kayak and canoe access</li> </ul>
Guilford-Mackintosh Park & Marina – 1345 NC HWY 61 Whitsett, NC	14.1 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch ramp (paddle craft &amp; electric motors only)</li> <li>• Kayak, canoe &amp; rowboat rentals</li> <li>• Hiking &amp; Mountain Biking Trail</li> </ul>
Stoney Creek Marina - 930 Indian Valley Dr, Burlington, NC	14.3 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kayak and canoe access</li> </ul>
Altamahaw Paddle Access - 2942 N North Carolina Hwy 87, Elon, NC	15.2 miles	
Lake Cammack 4790 Union Ridge Rd. Burlington, NC	16.9 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch ramp (paddle craft &amp; electric motors only)</li> <li>• Kayak, canoe &amp; rowboat rentals</li> <li>• Hiking &amp; Mountain Biking Trail</li> </ul>
Haw River Access – Pittsboro, NC	25 miles	
Lower Haw River State Natural Area - 160 Bynum Church Rd, Pittsboro, NC	25.3 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kayaking / Canoeing,</li> <li>• Fishing</li> </ul>

As the Town and County continue evaluating and expanding recreational amenities within the region, additional study on the viability of using existing waterways to expand passive water access (i.e. kayaking, walking trails along shoreline creating greenway connections, fishing areas, etc.) should be evaluated. Refer to Section 6.5.2 of this Document for additional information.

#### **4.1.1.2 Water Supply**

Based on a 2018 assessment of the Town's water utility system, Swepsonville retains a 0.300 million (300,000) gallon per day (MGD) capacity allocation in the City of Graham's drinking water production facilities. The current average day use by the Town is approximately 0.142 (142,000) MGD (47.3% of 0.300 MGD allocation).

The source of the public water serving the Town is Graham Mebane Lake. Water is treated at the J.D. Mackintosh, Jr. Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Burlington having a design capacity of 18 MGD.

As part of the water supply system, the Town owns and maintains approximately 18 miles of water distribution lines, which are generally sufficient to meet minimum design criteria for current demand and pressure needs. Future improvements may be needed in order to improve overall levels of service, increase system redundancy, and extend service to unserved areas.

The Town retains limited water supply capacity to meet projected demand and may need to secure additional regional capacity allocations within a 10-year planning window. .

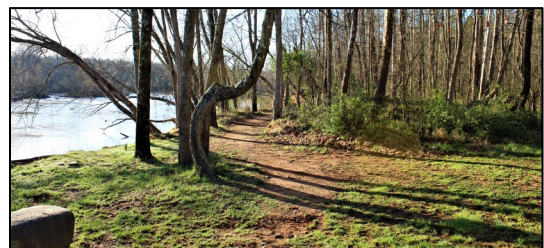
#### **4.1.2 Land Resources and Geography**

Much of the Town has a gentle rolling topography.

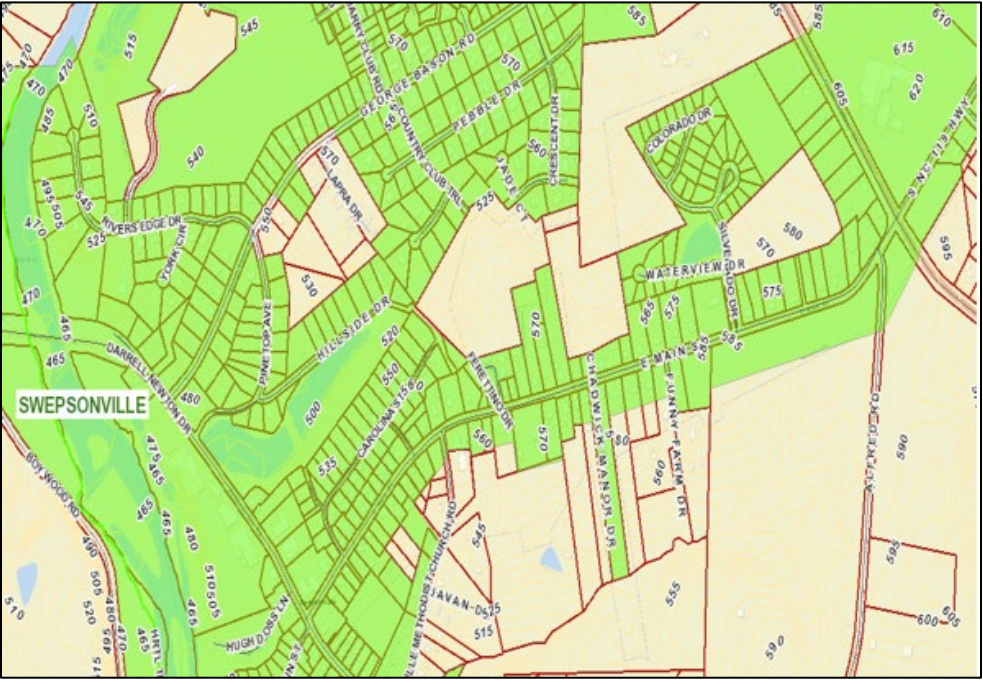
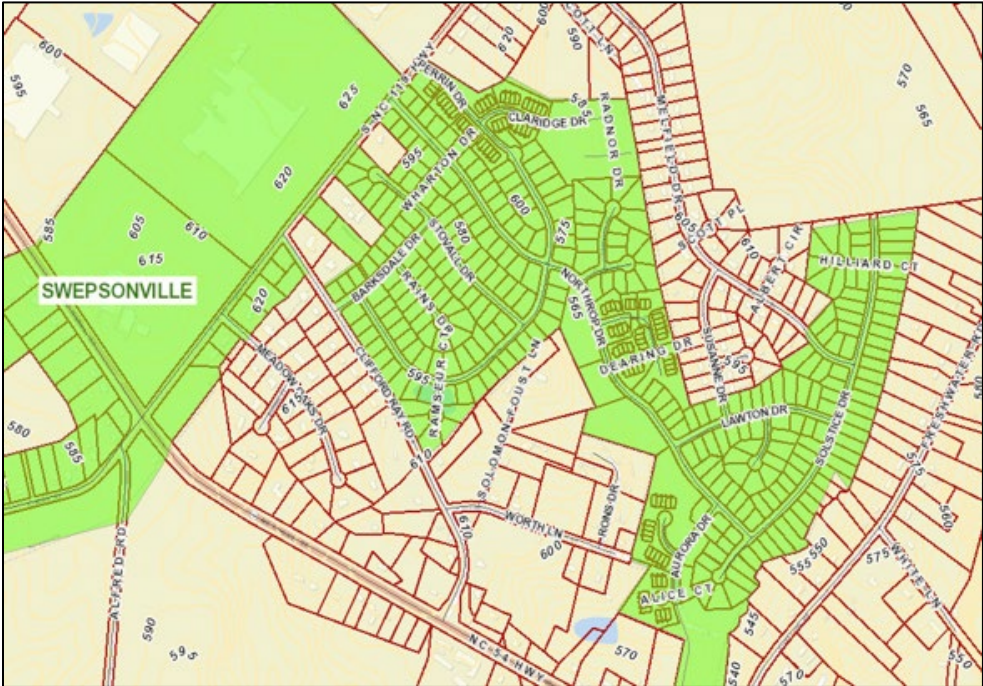
The highest point of the Town lies along South NC Highway 119, near the Honda Industrial Park, with an average elevation of 626 ft. mean sea level (msl). Towards the east of NC 119 property slopes down towards an elevation of 540 ft. msl along Solstice Drive and Aurora Drive.

The intersection of NC Highway 54 and Main Street has an average elevation of 585 ft. msl with a gentle slope dropping to 530 ft msl at the intersection of Main Street with Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road (aka Darrell Newton Drive), approximately 1 mile southwest of NC Highway 54. In the northern portion of the Town, the neighborhood near Brentwood Drive represents another highpoint with an average elevation of 580 ft. msl dropping to an elevation of 470 ft. along the banks of the Haw River.

The average elevation along the banks of the Haw River ranges from 470 to 460 ft. msl.



The following graphics from the Alamance County GIS mapping system serve to provide a simple graphic representation of the general slope of the Town from various vantage points.



Source: Alamance County GIS Mapping Data

According to the Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service dataset published in 1960, and the Alamance County GIS map data, the predominant soils in the Swepsonville area consist of the following:

- A. Chewacla loam: Soil characterized with a general slope range of under 2% with poor drainage and frequent flooding;
- B. Cullen clay loam: Soil with a slope range anywhere from 2 to 45% with good to moderate drainage characteristics;
- C. Davidson loam: Soil with a slope range anywhere from 2 to 15% with good to moderate drainage characteristics
- D. Enon sandy loam: Soil with a slope range anywhere from 2 to 15% with good to moderate drainage characteristics;
- E. Enon clay loam: Soil with a slope range anywhere from 2 to 10% with good to moderate drainage characteristics;
- F. Iredell loam: Soil with a slope range anywhere from 2 to 10% with good to moderate drainage characteristics;
- G. Riverview loam: Soil characterized with a general slope range of under 2% with poor drainage and frequent flooding;
- H. Rowan-Poindexter loam: Soil with a slope range anywhere from 15 to 45% with good to moderate drainage characteristics; ;
- I. Udorthents, loamy: Soil with a slope range anywhere from 0 to 25%

There are areas of the Town encumbered by floodplain/Special Flood Hazard Area as defined by FEMA. The following map depicts these areas as denoted on the State's Flood Risk Information System (FRIS) accessed at: <https://fris.nc.gov/fris/Home.aspx?ST=NC>.



Base flood elevation(s) range from 487.5 ft to 474 ft. Identified flood area is concentrated around the Haw River near Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road and Rivers Edge Drive in the north-western part of Town and Bob Vaughn and Woodside Avenue in the south-eastern portion of the town. It is unclear how many existing structures are impacted by existing special flood hazard area.

Soils in these areas are characterized as poorly draining and are not suitable to support various forms of development activity (i.e. residential or non-residential).

#### **4.1.2.1 Agricultural**

The Swepsonville area has been linked to various agricultural crops/activities since its inception due to its proximity to the Haw River, development of various mills, and prevalence of viable agricultural soils.

Since 1790 Swepsonville has been the site of numerous mills, either grist mills built to grind corn or flour or cotton mills, with the first cotton mill being constructed in 1868. In 1893 the Virginia Mill cotton mill was constructed, serving as the main source of employment in the Town until it closed in 1970. Remnants of the mill were purchased by the Town and converted into a park.

The gentle rolling topography and the prevalence of soils types surveyed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and recorded as “soils of state significance” and “prime farmland” has given the area a heritage in farming various crops.

Both Town and County governments are actively pursuing preservation of the local agricultural economy.

#### **4.1.2.2 Recreation**

As detailed in Section 4.1.1.1 of this Document, the Town is home to a regional park along the Haw River, specifically the Swepsonville River Park at 2472 Boy Wood Road. This 30-acre park facility, operated by Alamance County, offers over two miles of walking trails, fishing and boating opportunities, and picnicking.



Near the downtown area, off West Main Street and Bob Vaughn Road, is the Swepsonville Ballpark facility home to the [Swepsonville Sweepers](#).

The Sweepers, operated as part of the Olde North State League, is the largest summer collegiate baseball league in North Carolina. Composed of 13 teams, the season runs from the first of June through the end of July.

The following regional recreational amenities are available to local residents:

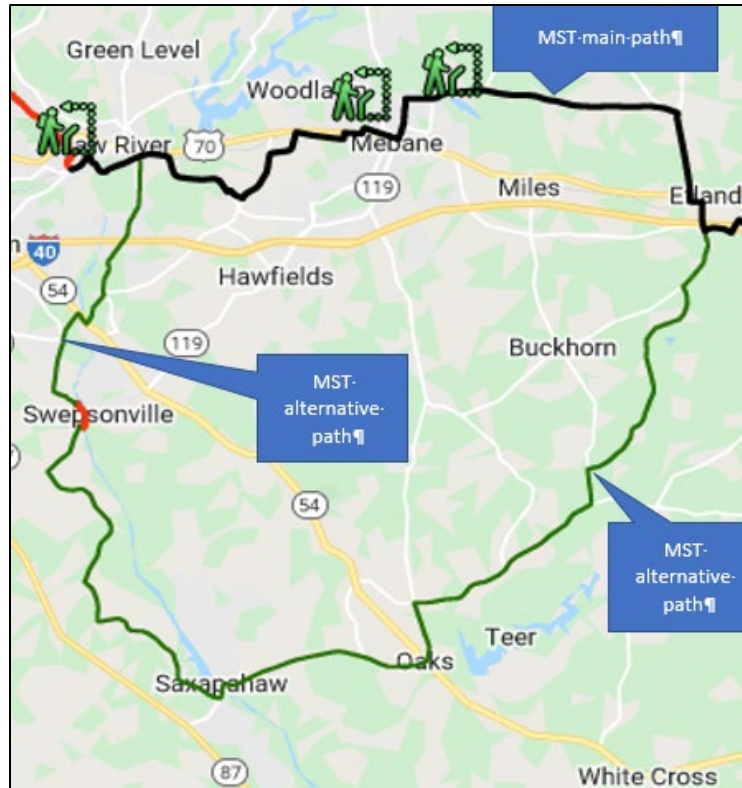
<b>Park Facility</b>	<b>Distance from Town</b>	<b>Amenities:</b>
Saxapahaw Island Park 5550 Church Rd, Graham, NC	6.3 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking Trails</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Meadow (open fields)</li> </ul>
Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area, 5075 Bass Mountain Rd, Snow Camp, NC	7.4 miles	Hiking and wildlife observation areas
Cedarrock Park 4242 R Dean Coleman Rd, Burlington, NC	11 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch ramp;</li> <li>• Kayak, canoe &amp; rowboat rentals</li> <li>• miles of Hiking, Mountain Biking, and Equestrian Trails;</li> <li>• 2 disc golf courses;</li> <li>• Picnic shelters;</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Camping</li> <li>• Volleyball Court</li> <li>• Basketball Court</li> <li>• Multi-purpose open fields</li> </ul>
Alamance Battleground State Historic Site – 5803 NC-62, Burlington, NC	11.6 miles	State historic site
Great Bend Park, 350 Greenwood Dr, Burlington, NC	11.9 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiking Trails (includes access to the State of NC Mountain to the Sea Trail)</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Kayak, canoe, paddle boat access;</li> <li>• Picnic shelters</li> </ul>

<b>Park Facility</b>	<b>Distance from Town</b>	<b>Amenities:</b>
<p>Shallow Ford Natural Area 1955 Gerringer Mill Rd, Burlington, NC</p>	<p>13 miles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5Hiking Trails (includes access to the State of NC Mountain to the Sea Trail)</li> <li>• Kayak, canoe, paddle boat access</li> <li>• Wildflower Meadow and Observation Deck;</li> <li>• Picnic shelters</li> <li>• Camping</li> </ul>
<p>Pleasant Grove Community Center and Park 3958 N NC Highway 49 Burlington, NC</p>	<p>13.2 miles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Center (including fitness room and activity room)</li> <li>• Lighted ballfields</li> <li>• Walking Track</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Multi-purpose fields</li> <li>• Horseshoe pit</li> </ul>
<p>Guilford-Mackintosh – 1345 NC Hwy 61 Whinsett NC</p>	<p>14.1 miles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch ramp;</li> <li>• Kayak, canoe &amp; rowboat rentals</li> <li>• Hiking &amp; Mountain Biking Trail;</li> <li>• Picnic shelters;</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Sand Volleyball Court</li> <li>• Horseshoe pit</li> </ul>
<p>Eli Whitney Community Center 4110 E. Greensboro-Chapel Hill Rd Graham, NC</p>	<p>15.7 miles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Center (including fitness room, gymnasium, and activity room)</li> <li>• Walking Track</li> <li>• Dog Park</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Multi-purpose fields</li> </ul>

Park Facility	Distance from Town	Amenities:
Lake Cammack 4790 Union Ridge Rd. Burlington, NC	16.9 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch ramp (paddle craft &amp; electric motors only)</li> <li>• Kayak, canoe &amp; rowboat rentals</li> <li>• Hiking &amp; Mountain Biking Trail</li> <li>• Picnic shelters;</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Swimming pool</li> </ul>
Lake Mackintosh 2704 Huffman Mill Rd. Burlington, NC	12.6 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Private boat launch ramp</li> <li>• Kayak &amp; rowboat rentals</li> <li>• Picnic shelters;</li> <li>• Playground</li> </ul>

**Mountain to Sea Trail (MST):** MST is State hiking trail stretching approximately 1,175 miles from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks. Beginning in Murphy and finishing in Manteo, NC, the MST serves as the main pedestrian transportation artery (i.e. walking and bike riding) of North Carolina bisecting the state west to east. It travels through several major municipalities including Asheville, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Durham, and Raleigh.

Currently there are over 20 trail miles open to the public in Alamance County along the Haw River offering views of the river and its plants and wildlife, as well as opportunities to walk and hike along the river. A segment of the alternate MST route traverses into the corporate limits of the Town on the west side of the Haw River, down through the Saxapahaw area, and reconnecting with the main trail in the Efland area in adjacent Orange County.



Source: Google Maps

#### 4.1.2.3 **Transportation Facilities**

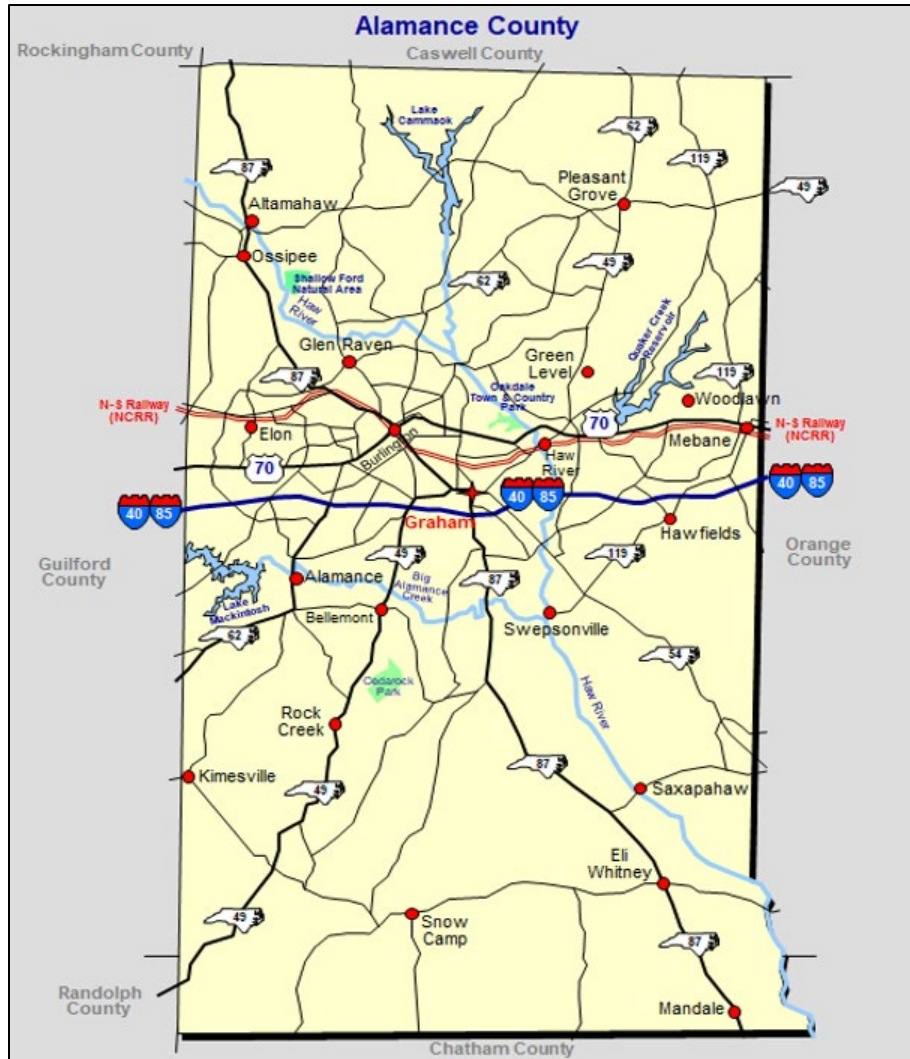
Alamance County has an extensive road system including:

- One federal highway (US Highway 70).
- Two Interstates (Interstates 40 and 85 combined highway); and
- Five state highways (NC 49, 54, 62, 87, and 119).

The majority of roadways serving the Town are a mixture of local and state-maintained roadways. NC State Highway 54 bisects the Town along the eastern corporate limits (between East Main Street and NC Highway 119 near the Alexander Wilson Elementary School and Honda Industrial complex).

Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road is the main north/south collector road running through the western portion of the Town connecting the area to the Saxapahaw area (southern Alamance County) and the City of Graham (north of Swepsonville).

NC State Highway 87 is another north/south collector roadway in the region. Located west of Swepsonville, approximately 3 miles from East Main Street in what is defined as 'downtown', the route provides access to the City of Graham (north) and the Town of Pittsboro in Chatham County (south).



Source: [Website Featuring Map Data for North and South Carolina Counties.](#)

The majority of roadways serving the Town are a mixture of local and state-maintained roadways. NC State Highway 54 bisects the Town along the eastern corporate limits (between East Main Street and NC Highway 119 near the Alexander Wilson Elementary School and Honda Industrial complex).

Swebsonville-Saxapahaw Road is the main north/south collector road running through the western portion of the Town connecting the area to the Saxapahaw area (southern Alamance County) and the City of Graham (north of Swebsonville).

NC State Highway 87 is another north/south collector roadway in the region. Located west of Swebsonville, approximately 3 miles from East Main Street in what is defined as 'downtown', the route provides access to the of Graham (north) and the Town of Pittsboro in Chatham County (south).

Transportation matters for the region are handled through the [Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) (BGMPO), a federally designated agency responsible for working with residents and local, state, and federal agencies to coordinate transportation planning and project development within the Burlington urbanized area.



Source: BGMPO website

From an historical perspective, the Burlington-Graham area was originally designated an urbanized area by the US Bureau of Census in 1974.

Alamance County managed transportation planning for the region as a whole until approximately 1998, when responsibility for managing the MPO was transferred to the City of Burlington. At this time, the MPO was re-branded to the BGMPO. BGMPO is one of 18 metropolitan planning organizations within the State of North Carolina, mandated by Federal law, to serve as the transportation policy-organization for an urbanized area. Membership of the organization is comprised of representatives from local government

and transportation authorities. The Town of Swepsonville is currently not a member of BGMPO.

From a pedestrian transportation facilities standpoint, the Town does not have sidewalks or bicycle lanes. Current development standards do not require installation of sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes as part of the development approval process. When amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are considered, the Town should adopt requiring installation of sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes in new developments on both sides of the road, with limited exceptions as a means of expanding pedestrian travel opportunities.

#### **4.1.2.4 Growth**

The Town of Swepsonville is located in the Burlington NC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which the U.S. Census Bureau estimated had a population of 171,346 in 2020. Swepsonville is also within the larger geographic boundary of the Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point Combined Statistical Area (CSA), which had an estimated population of 1.7 million in 2020 as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. The region's population has increased in recent decades and is projected to continue within the next 20 to 30 years.

## **4.2 Cultural Resources**

### **4.2.1 Parks and Recreation, Outdoor Adventure and Community Outreach**

The Town currently does not have a Parks and Recreation Department, but as detailed in Section(s) 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.2.2 of this Document, local residents have access to numerous park and recreational facilities.

Beginning in 2020 the Swepsonville Farmers Market, a local downtown merchant, began holding *Annual Swepsonville Day*. The event, occurring in April, features live music, pony rides, food and craft vendors, a fishing tournament, treasure hunt, dance competition, a 'Swepsonville queen' competition, and a town parade.

**Alamance County:** The County is home to a rich collection of natural resources and a growing system of parks and trails that support healthy lifestyles and a high quality of life. As summarized in this Document, Alamance County Parks and Recreation staff currently maintain a number of parks and community centers throughout the region and operates a number of athletic leagues for residents (i.e. baseball, volleyball, etc.).

This includes actively working to complete the [Haw River Trail](#), along the Haw River including the 35-mile Haw River Paddle Trail.



Major natural resources include prime farmland, the Haw River and forests that protect water quality. In addition, there are thirteen designated Natural Heritage Natural Areas in the County. These are unique natural assets that harbor rare plants and animals. A very important natural area, the Cane Creek Mountains, was recently acquired and opened as a park.

As summarized in Section 4.1.2.2 of this Document, the Town and County are home to segments of the State’s Mountains to Sea Trail.

## 4.3 Historic Resources

### 4.3.1 Heritage Preservation and Tourism

**Swepsonville:** A review of the database of the National Register of Historic Places for Swepsonville shows individual structures have only been surveyed, but have not been listed on the National Register of Historic Places including the Julian Baker House, Swepsonville Mill Houses on E. Main St., Mill Houses on W. Main Street.



**Alamance County:** A review of the database of the National Register of Historic Places for Alamance County reported over 60 national registered historic resources within Alamance County. Alamance County adopted the Historic Properties Commission

Ordinance in 2004 establishing the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission (HPC) to regulate historic resources within the unincorporated areas of the County and participating municipalities. The ordinance allows the HPC to manage property acquisition on behalf of Alamance County. The HPC has the power to prepare and recommend a historic preservation element for the County comprehensive plan and select municipal plans by request.

In developing this Document, Town officials have adopted goals/policies to protect the rich past of the Town by recommending supportive land use patterns.

**4.3.1.1 Downtown Swepsonville**

The area residents refer to as the community’s downtown is generally located at the intersection of Main Street and Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road.

While most of the corridor (East and West Main Street and the eastern portion of Swesonville-Saxapahaw Road) is dominated by single-family residential housing there is a gas station/grill, the Swepsonville Baptist Church, and commercial building at the intersection. There is also body shop, Steve Mc Daniel Paint & Body at 2700 Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Rd.

The Swepsonville Farmers Market and event venue is located north of the body shop along Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road serving as a:

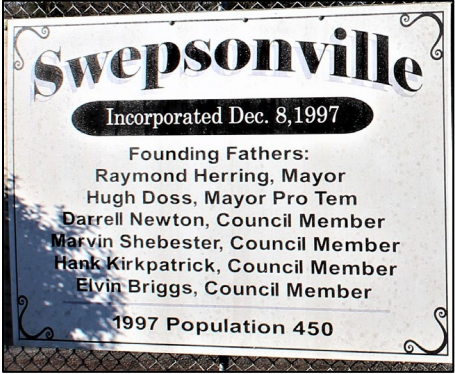
- Rental Venue (i.e. events facility)
- Artisan Market,
- Farmers Market, and
- Flea Market

As part of the farmers market activities, the facility provides outdoor concerts from April through September, activities for kids (i.e. pony rides, playground, etc.) and allows for canoeing and fishing from their adjacent lake. The property is the site of the annual *Swepsonville Day* previously discussed in Section 4.2 of this Document.



The Town Hall and a Swepsonville Fire Station Number 1 are also in the area, with direct vehicular access off Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road.

There is a large vacant parcel, north of Town hall and across from the fire station. The property, the old location of the Virginia Mills textile company, represents a major opportunity for downtown redevelopment efforts. As redevelopment efforts are reviewed, local partnerships and cooperative efforts should be explored. Most notably with the operators of the Swepsonville Farmers Market.



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## 5 VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

Determining what is important to a community is critical. The voice of Swepsonville was sought by two techniques described below. This information, when summarized and ranked in order of popularity, provides the “value statements” about Swepsonville. These statements provide the foundation for the preparation of goals and objectives. From these goals and objectives, the team crafted draft strategies refined for Swepsonville’s needs by its elected leadership.

### 5.1 Community Participation – *What does our community want?*

Community participation for the initial planning process in the Winter of 2021 was a blend of two different, but integral, approaches for comprehensive outreach. First, the planning team performed a series of stakeholder interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of ‘likes’, ‘dislikes’, ‘wishes’, and ‘fears’ in the community, as well as identify top priorities for the Town’s progression toward the future. Secondly, an online survey was also available which was advertised through the Town’s website and Facebook account over three months from November 18, 2021 to February 25, 2022.

The following sections highlight the process, results and opportunities for action.

#### 5.1.1 Stakeholder Interviews – *How these were performed and why so extensive!*

Business stakeholder interviews are a great addition to any community engagement process because they give detailed insight into the opinions and perspectives of many members of a community. What makes this process unique for Swepsonville is that, due to the size of Swepsonville, almost every business was interviewed as part of this process. A random sample of business owners would have been too small to gain valuable information; so, each member of the business community could be reached was interviewed, on a one-to-one basis, to fully flush out the main content to be highlighted in Swepsonville’s plan for the future.

This outreach process spread goodwill throughout the Swepsonville community early in the process enabling word-of-mouth advertising for this initiative and better community participation to support the Town Plan. These interviews focused on the community and did not obtain proprietary information about the businesses.

While attempts to reach all businesses were made, there are likely several home-based or e-commerce businesses that were not identifiable. Most of the interviews were conducted within the places of business. During the endeavor, the interviewers gained a more comprehensive understanding of people’s attitudes, as well as, the physical characteristics and local context of the community layout, conditions of infrastructure, and numerous other valuable insights of Swepsonville.

#### 5.1.2 Summary Results of Interviews, Survey, & Public Input Session – *What our community said!*

Since interviews were conducted in person, the survey questions were not distributed ahead of the interview, improving the spontaneity and therefore the quality of the results. The results obtained were “first impressions”, including both the passion and emotion often shared when meeting face to face.

The interview responses were categorized and grouped separately for each of the six questions asked:

1. Do you reside within the Town of Swepsonville?
2. What do you like about Swepsonville (present)?
3. What do you dislike about Swepsonville (present)?
4. What wishes do you have for Swepsonville (future)?
5. What fears do you have for Swepsonville (future)?
6. What should be the #1 priority for Swepsonville moving forward?

The responses were then cataloged for ranking purposes enabling the results to be summarized graphically. The following pages illustrate the responses in order of their respective frequency rankings.

This interview process had an additional benefit of determining whether the proprietors of the businesses interviewed were Town residents. The planning team determined that of the seven people interviewed in Swepsonville's businesses, one was a Swepsonville resident, while the remaining six interviewed were not. This determination is important to note since many businesses may often have as much or more invested in a town as an average resident. Since these individuals are not residents and therefore are ineligible to vote in the local municipal elections, this process offered an opportunity for the business community's voice to be heard in greater numbers than may be represented by either local member-supported business organizations, or by election results.

The six questions were also available through an online survey the Town prepared and monitored. A total of thirty two people completed the online survey over a period of three months when a notice and link to the survey was posted on the Town's website and Facebook accounts. Thirty of the people participating in the online surveys answered they are Swepsonville residents.

The following summary of priorities and charts illustrate responses to the remaining five survey interview questions from the online surveys.

The rankings indicate **'Maintain Streets, Water, Sewer, and Roads'** (41%) as the 1<sup>st</sup> priority, by a wide margin, for survey respondents. 2% of respondents specifically identified *'expanding water and sewer system'* as a separate priority. This priority was emphasized by related responses to another survey question as listed below:

- Related response to this question, *'What wishes do you have for Swepsonville?'*, respondents indicated: *'Fix City pipes so water will be clear/clean'* (1%), and, *'Improvements made on our roads'* (1%).

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority, 17% of survey respondents indicated **'Retain Our Character'** as their next goal. This priority was emphasized by the related responses to other survey questions as detailed below:

- Related response to the question, *'What do you like about Swepsonville?'*, respondents indicated: *'Small Town Feel'* (19%), *'Slow Pace/Quiet'* (18%), *'Affordability'* (15%), and a *'Sense of Community'* (12%).

- A related response to the question, *'What do you dislike about Swepsonville?'*, was: *'Poor Property Maintenance'* (9%).
- Approximately 18% of respondents indicated there was *'Nothing'* they disliked about the Town.
- Related responses to the question, *'What wishes do you have for Swepsonville?'*, resulted in *'Improve Appearance of the Town'* (17%) and 7% wanted to *'Stay Small with Controlled Growth'*.
- Related responses given to the question, *'What fears do you have for Swepsonville?'*, were *'Loss of Small-town Appeal'* (29%), and *'Too Much Commercial'* (25%).

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority, 16% of survey respondents indicated **'Keep Crime Low'** as their next goal. This priority was emphasized by the related responses to survey questions as detailed below:

- Related response to the question, *'What do you like about Swepsonville?'*, respondents indicated: *'Slow Pace/Quiet'* (18%), and *'Low Crime Rate'* (13%).
- A related response to the question, *'What do you dislike about Swepsonville?'*, was: *'Poor Property Maintenance'* (9%).
- Related responses given to the question, *'What fears do you have for Swepsonville?'*, were *'Crime'* (22%) and *'Driving Skills'* (2%) .

The 4<sup>th</sup> priority, 5% of survey respondents indicated **'Community Events'**, which was emphasized by the related responses to survey questions as detailed below:

- A related response to the question, *'What do you like about Swepsonville?'*, respondents indicated: *'Outdoor Activities'* (4%).
- Related responses to the question, *'What do you dislike about Swepsonville?'*, was: *'Nothing to Do, No Events'* (11%) and *'Not Enough Parks'* (7%).
- A related response to the question, *'What wishes do you have for Swepsonville?'*, was: *'More Parks and Recreation Facilities'* (19%).

For the 5<sup>th</sup> priority, there was a tie among three responses: **'Growth'**, **'More Jobs'** and **'Getting to Know Each Other to Work Together'** which was emphasized by the related responses to other survey questions as detailed below:

- Regarding **'Growth'**, related responses to the question, *'What do you dislike about Swepsonville?'*, was: *'Not Enough Restaurants or Stores'* (27%), and *'Stagnation of Growth'* (7%). Related responses given to the question, *'What fears do you have for Swepsonville?'*, were, *'Too Much Commercial'* (25%), and *'Stagnation of Growth'* (6%).
- Regarding **'Getting to Know Each Other to Work Together'**, related responses to the question, *'What do you like about Swepsonville?'*, respondents indicated: *'Small Town Feel'* (19%), *'Slow Pace/Quiet'* (18%), *'Family Friendly'* (14%), and *'Sense of*

*Community'* (12%). A related responses given to the question, *'What fears do you have for Swepsonville?'*, was, *'Loss of Small-town Appeal'* (29%

Numerous responses tied for the Town's 6<sup>th</sup> and final priority/goal for Swepsonville, including:

- Restaurant;
- Police Department;
- Keep Town Clean;
- Building Workforce Talent;
- Expand Water and Sewer;
- Stay Small; and
- Love to Have Grocery Store;

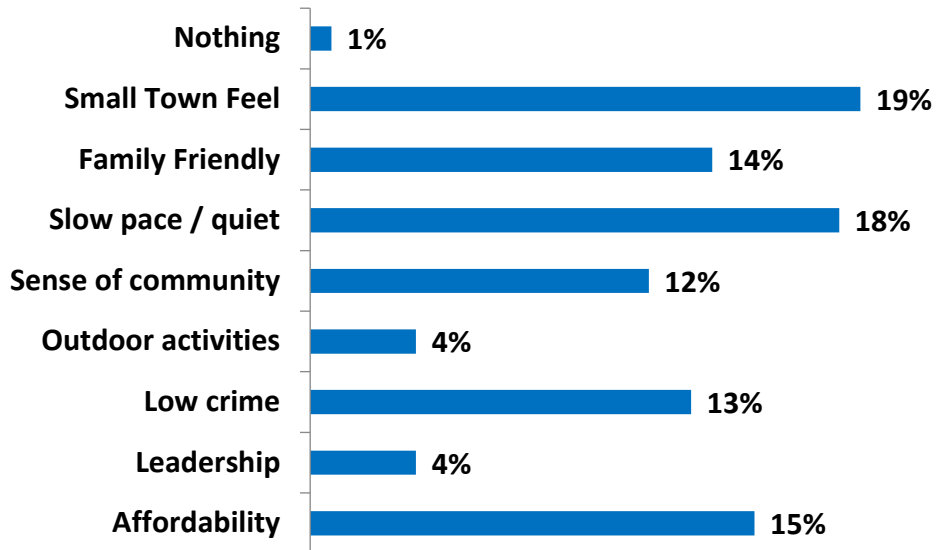
**Final Priorities.** After combining tied answers with their related answers, and taking the concerns that had broader impacts not necessarily directly related to the Town's planning efforts, community concerns fall into the following final priorities.

The Town Plan 2040 responds to each of these priorities in section 5.2.

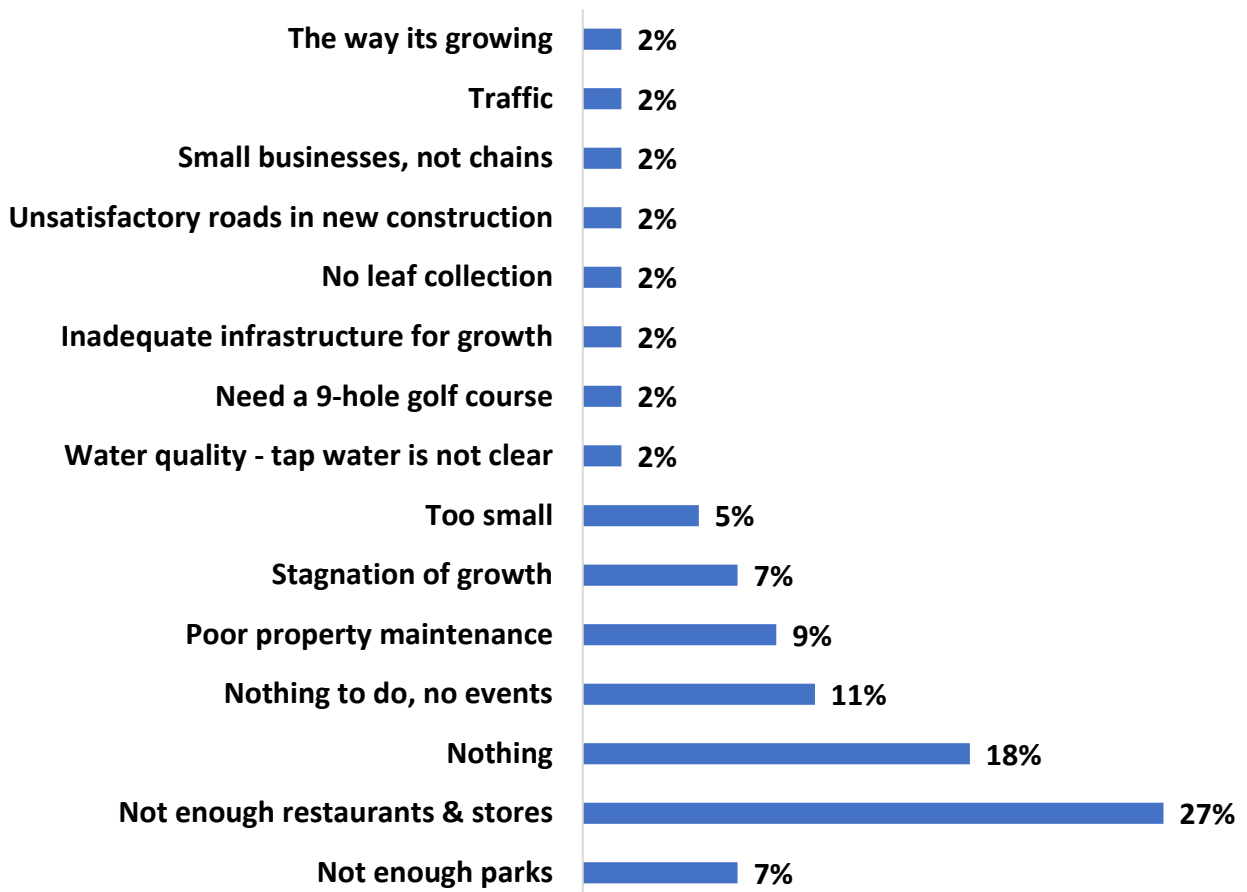
- ***'Maintain and Enhance Local Infrastructure (i.e. streets, water, sewer, sidewalks, and roads)';***
- ***'Stay Family-Oriented';***
- ***'Retain Our Character;'***
- ***'Attract Business and Improve Downtown Swepsonville;'***
- ***'Provide More Natural Areas, Parks, and Landscapes and Attract More Things to Do';***
- ***'Come Together as a Community';***
- ***'Keep Crime Low';***
- ***'Clean Up Our Town';*** and
- ***'Address Businesses Permitted'***

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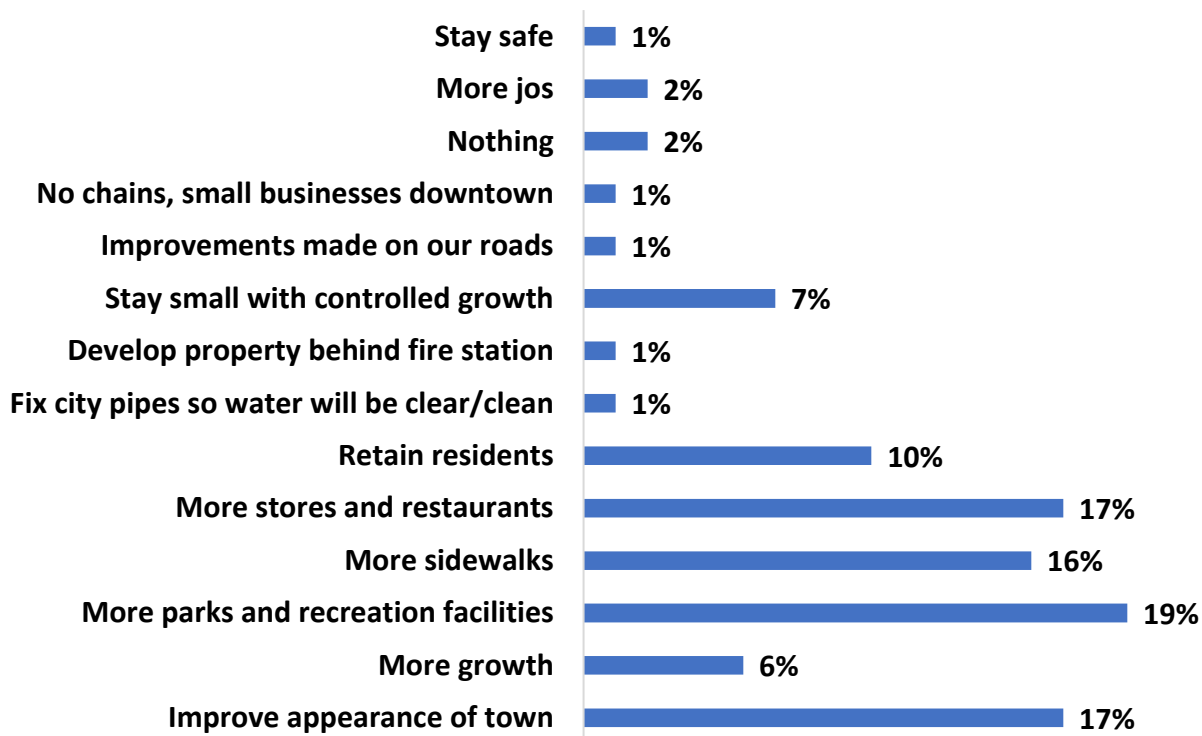
### ***What do you like about Swepsonville?***



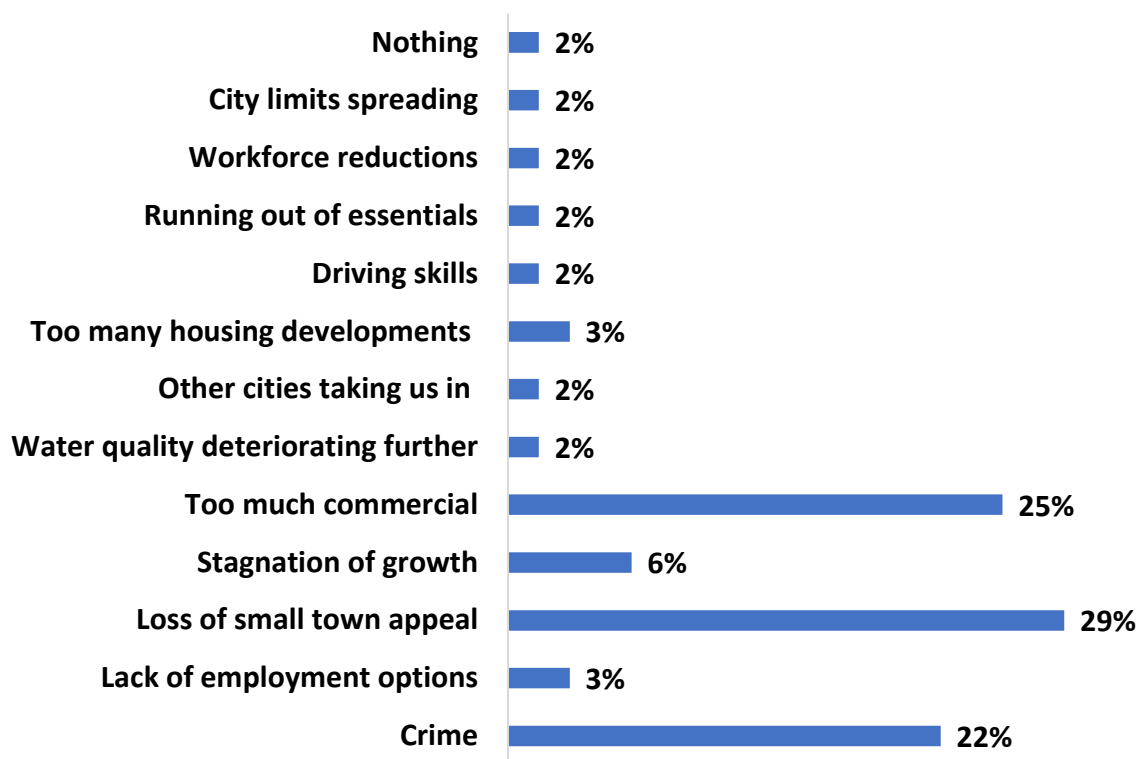
### ***What do you dislike about Swepsonville?***



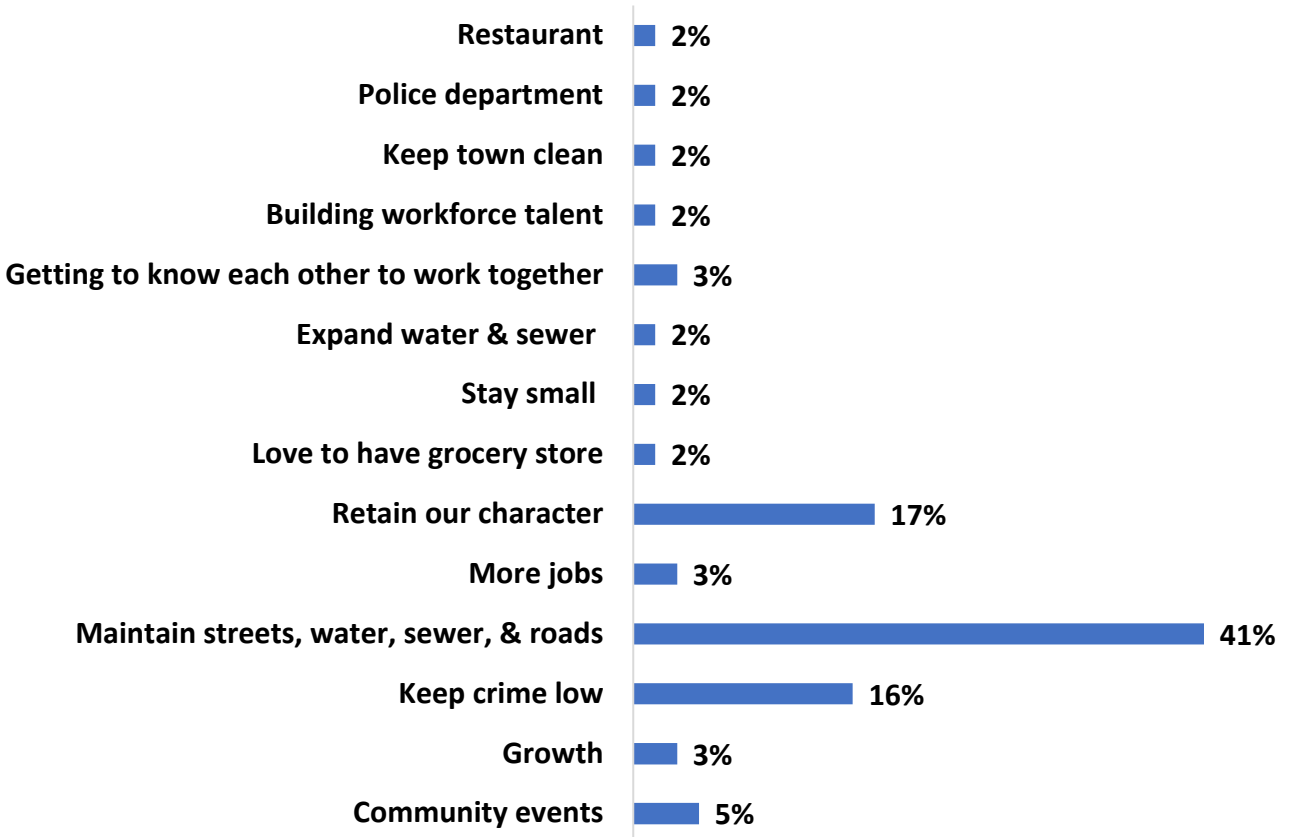
### ***What wishes do you have for Swepsonville?***



### ***What fears do you have for Swepsonville?***



## What should be the #1 priority for Swepsonville moving forward?

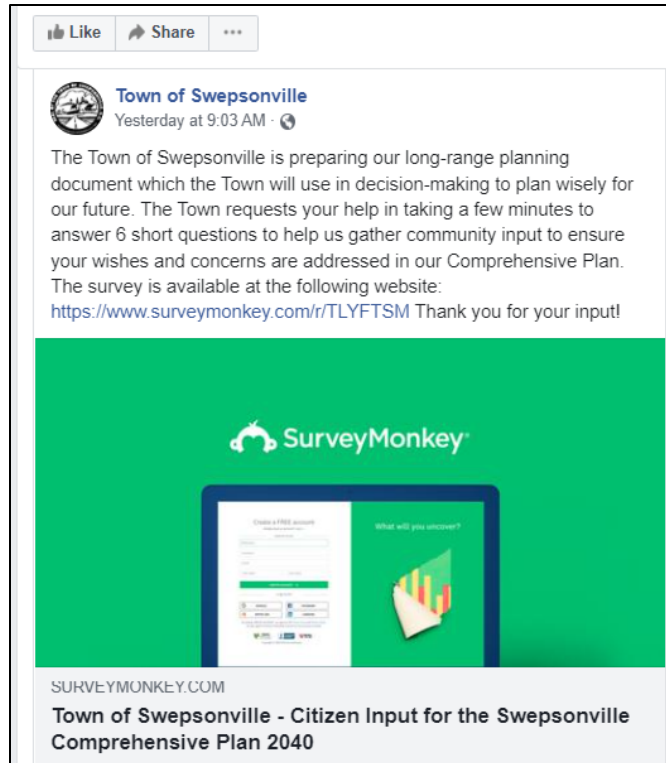


### 5.1.3 Community Input

The Town of Swepsonville advertised the online survey on the Town’s website homepage and Facebook account; and



*Posted on the Town of Swepsonville’s Website on 11/18/2021*



*Posted on the Town of Swepsonville’s Facebook Account on 11/18/2021*

#### **5.1.4 Social Media Platform**

Social media applications (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) have become commonplace. Ninety percent of Millennials (adults born between 1982 and 1998) use social media on a regular basis, along with 77% of adults born between 1966 and 1981. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), Baby Boomers’ use of social media has tripled since the year 2010, and 35% of those aged 65 and older report using social media regularly. Social media has revolutionized the way we communicate with each other (just as the telephone once did) and has become a vital means of interaction between individuals, organizations, and communities.

Local governments are using social media for outreach to constituents, for transparency in their operations, and to increase citizen participation. Common uses of social media include crime prevention and police assistance, emergency alerts and severe weather updates, local activities and event registrations, construction updates and road closings, advertising job openings, public service announcements, and announcements of Town Council and advisory board meetings. According to the [Institute for Local Government](#), local governments increasingly find social media to be more than just a means of disseminating information, and see it to help staff, citizen advisory groups and elected officials make better decisions, broaden community engagement and improve public discourse, and ultimately to increase trust in government.

The Town of Swepsonville assisted in using the Town’s website to facilitate community participation. After adoption, the Town can use social media to build support for implementation of the Town Plan 2040. As a tool for citizen engagement, the Town’s

social media platform can help the *Swepsonville Town Plan 2040 Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan* remain fresh and in the forefront of this dialogue, becoming a ‘living’ document to help Swepsonville achieve its goals.

#### **5.1.4.1 Strategy: Develop a Consolidated Social Media Platform**

Below are near-term action steps the Town of Swepsonville can take to expand its social media platform and widen its digital footprint. The [International City Management Association](#) has a wealth of resources to assist the Town in this endeavor.

1. ***Continue to update and expand social media.*** The Town can continue to use its official website to work closely with all Town departments to provide current information to the public. Following are the most immediate priority tasks recommended for the Town’s social media.
  - a. ***Continue to maintain Town website.*** The Town recently launched a new attractive website which should be frequently updated and expanded to increase use and convenience.
  - b. ***Add links and open new social media applications as soon as possible.*** On the Town’s website homepage, links should be added to its Facebook account. The Town should consider using Instagram. Even if posts are infrequent in the beginning, opening accounts now would ensure that the Town can claim the appropriate and authorized ‘handles’ (e.g., @townofSwepsonvillenc, etc.) and create topical and relevant hashtags (e.g. #visitSwepsonvillenc, etc.)

## **5.2 Goals-Objectives-Strategies**

The objectives and strategies appearing under each goal appear in priority rankings based upon the number of public comments. These may be pursued as deemed appropriate by the Town, its citizens, and businesses.

### **5.2.1 Goal 1: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE!**

#### **WATER:**

**5.2.1.1 Objective 1: Address the Town’s water needs as identified within the 2018 Alley, Williams, Carmen, and King, Inc. report.** As detailed within this Document, the Town is expected to exceed its current water allocation by 2027. This will severely impact the Town’s growth potential and impact/exacerbate existing water quality issues.

**Strategy 1:** *Initiate negotiations with the City of Graham to discuss development of a new water allocation agreement to meeting anticipated water needs for Swepsonville.*

**Strategy 2:** *Develop a formal schedule to meet with City of Graham officials to review water usage in an effort to more effectively plan for Town water needs. Meetings should occur, at a minimum, every 2 years to review water usage rates.*

***Strategy 3:*** Amend local ordinances to include the City of Graham as a review partner in all subdivision and non-residential site plan review projects to ensure utility opportunities/constraints are properly identified and addressed during the plan review process.

***Strategy 4:*** Working with the City of Graham staff, develop a long-range water service plan for the community including a schedule for regular servicing of lines (i.e. cleaning, flushing, etc.), installation and upgrading of utility lines, provision of water for fire suppression services (i.e. installation of fire hydrants), and addressing of water quality issues. This service plan will also identify how Swepsonville and Graham can coordinate local educational efforts for members of the community.

**SEWER:**

**5.2.1.2      Objective 2: Address the Town’s long-term sewer needs.**

***Strategy 1:*** Initiate negotiations with the City of Burlington to discuss development of a new sewer allocation agreement to meeting anticipated sewer treatment needs for Swepsonville.

***Strategy 2:*** Develop a formal schedule to meet with City of Burlington officials to review sewer usage in an effort to more effectively plan for Town needs. Meetings should occur, at a minimum, every 2 years to review sewer usage rates.

***Strategy 3:*** Amend local ordinances to include the City of Burlington as a review partner in all subdivision and non-residential site plan review projects to ensure utility opportunities/constraints are properly identified and addressed during the plan review process.

***Strategy 4:*** Working with the City of Burlington staff, develop a long-range sewer service plan for the community including a schedule for regular servicing of lines, development of local infrastructure (i.e. lift stations, pre-treatment facilities, etc.), and installation and upgrading of lines. This service plan will also identify how Swepsonville and Burlington can coordinate local educational efforts for members of the community to address ‘sewer health issues’.

**ROADWAYS:**

**5.2.1.3      Objective 3: Address the Town’s long-term road maintenance needs.**

***Strategy 1:*** The Town shall review the possibility of establishing a local roadway maintenance program and apply for a share of State Powell Bill monies to maintain local (i.e. Town) roadways.

**5.2.1.4 Objective 4: Complete a study of the intersection of East Main Street and Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road to identify opportunities for roadway safety improvements.**

**Strategy 1:** *Review existing driveway cuts to determine if there is opportunity to reduce the number/location of driveway access to increase safety by reducing traffic conflicts.*

**Strategy 2:** *Review options for roadway re-design to address traffic safety issues while preserving existing business property. Some options that may be viable are a small scale traffic circle/round-a-bout.*

**STORMWATER:**

**5.2.1.5 Objective 5: Prepare, fund, and implement a stormwater master plan so the Town may start budgeting towards the design of a community stormwater plan.** This plan will be designed to cover existing developed areas and identify how new development will be expected to 'tie into' the system and augment the Town's stormwater system.

**Strategy 1:** *Amend the Town Zoning Ordinance to develop comprehensive stormwater management standards. This includes thresholds for redevelopment projects (residential and commercial) to install and maintain stormwater management systems.*

**SIDEWALKS AND BICYCLE LANES:**

**5.2.1.6 Objective 6: Prepare, fund, and implement a sidewalk/greenway and bicycle lane master plan so the Town may start budgeting toward building a sidewalk and bicycle system connecting existing and future neighborhoods, town amenities, and local businesses.**

**Strategy 1:** *Install crosswalks at key intersections to facilitate safe pedestrian access to key areas within the community.*

**Strategy 2:** *Ensure connectivity to parks and natural areas.*

**Strategy 3:** *Ensure access is ADA compatible for universal access.*

**5.2.1.7 Objective 7: Require developers to construct sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes in new neighborhoods and commercial developments.**

**Strategy 1:** *Amend Town's Zoning Ordinance to require installation of sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes as part of residential and non-residential developments.*

5.2.2 **Goal 2: STAY FAMILY ORIENTED!**

5.2.2.1 **Objective 1: Identify which barriers currently exist in Swepsonville that inhibit it from being a more family friendly community.**

*Strategy 1: Identify whether the following barriers exist in the Town that inadvertently inhibit it from being family-oriented including, but not limited to:*

- Lack of affordable housing;
- Exclusionary and single-use zoning;
- Insensitive urban design;
- Property tax too high;
- Lack of services;
- Lack of quality education; and
- Crime.

5.2.2.2 **Objective 2: Continue to support housing at affordable prices.**

*Strategy 1: Continue to offer practices within the Town's ability to foster development of housing at affordable prices.*

5.2.2.3 **Objective 3: Ensure the zoning map and the Zoning Ordinance advance interests of families in the approval process of siting child-care facilities.**

*Strategy 1: Review the zoning map to ascertain if zoning districts where child-care facilities are allowed are convenient to neighborhoods and employers.*

*Strategy 2: Ensure the Zoning Ordinance's approval process for child-care facilities balances convenience to families while ensuring compatibility to surrounding land uses.*

5.2.2.4 **Objective 4: Safe Neighborhoods.**

*Strategy 1: Identify and continue practices that consistently achieve low crime rates throughout Swepsonville neighborhoods.*

5.2.3 **Goal 3: RETAIN OUR CHARACTER!**

5.2.3.1 **Objective 1: Ensure development within the Town is consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives of the Plan.** Development shall be consistent with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and various land use categories goals/objectives adopted as part of this document.

5.2.3.2 **Objective 2: Ensure proposed residential and non-residential development activities are similar in scope and intensity to surrounding land uses, are not out of character for the area in which they are located and are designed to strengthen the Town's identity.**

**5.2.3.3 Objective 3: Encourage development at appropriate densities in areas where existing services/infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, road, stormwater, etc.) are already provided and are viable to support the project.** Swepsonville’s growth will be directed, through application of the future land use map and zoning map, to areas where utilities and services are already provided.

**5.2.3.4 Objective 4: Apply standards of the Zoning Ordinance to assure quality growth.** Assess whether the Zoning Ordinance addresses the community’s priorities to manage growth to assure safety and quality.

**5.2.3.5 Objective 5: Complete additional Small Area Plans or Master Plans of those focus areas denoted on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).** Areas identified as ‘future growth areas’ on the FLUM will need additional study/analysis, including the proposed new downtown corridor.

**5.2.3.6 Objective 6: Continue on-going partnerships with the City of Graham and City of Mebane to, where feasible, agree on long term corporate limit boundaries/planning areas for the three municipalities.**

**5.2.4 Goal 4: ATTRACT BUSINESS AND IMPROVE DOWNTOWN!**

**5.2.4.1 Objective 1: Harness the imminent opportunities of both the eastward expansion of the Triad and westward expansion of the Triangle along both the NC Highway 54 and Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road corridor while managing growth within Swepsonville.**

*Strategy 1: Encourage private investment within Swepsonville by updating development ordinances to encourage desired development and establish quality standards and specifications to protect the environmentally sensitive and historically relevant assets of the Town.*

*Strategy 2: Complete an Assessment of Required Review Procedures. Existing development review procedures, standards and specifications shall be evaluated and updated in an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to ensure compliance with the adopted Plan to maximize development of a new downtown core.*

**5.2.4.2 Objective 2: Support existing businesses and encourage additional businesses outside the downtown area that complement and not compete with downtown.**

*Strategy 1: Complete a comprehensive study on the redevelopment of the old Virginia Mills Property into a new downtown center/potential government complex and community park/event venue. The Town should complete a master plan study on redevelopment opportunities and constraints and seek public/private partnerships for the ultimate redevelopment of the parcel expanding both economic development and cultural opportunities for the community.*

**Strategy 2:** *Complete a comprehensive study on a new downtown district consistent with the adopted 2040 Town Plan. This study will assist the Town in creation of a new Main Street (MS) downtown district (See Objective 3 for more detail).*

**Strategy 3:** *Ensure Town standards and specifications encourage growth and expansion of businesses. The Town should consider writing and adopting Zoning Ordinance Amendments to identify different commercial zoning districts with varying permitted uses and development standards.*

**5.2.4.3 Objective 3: Preserve the small-town appeal of downtown Swepsonville while encouraging compatible business growth through development of revised development standards and specifications.**

**Strategy 1:** *Create a Main Street District (MS) through zoning standards and specifications with architectural design standards and specifications as well as development incentives designed to allow existing business to grow and encourage compatible new development. As indicated on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), an area deserving additional study is the corridor along Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road near the existing Town Hall allowing for the creation of a true downtown development district. Careful consideration will go into the preparation of design standards and specifications that reinforce the small town feel through an understanding of architectural and urban design principles that direct the placement and massing of structures.*

*Attention will be also given to what may be considered the public realm, typically composed of streets, sidewalks, and civic spaces to help guide the Town's decision-making of details when investing in light posts, outside furniture, landscaping and sidewalk surfaces.*

**Strategy 2:** *Give attention during preparation of the new Main Street District (MS) to address development standards of adjacent properties and streets. As the new Main Street increases in development interest and popularity as a destination for commerce, entertainment and civic events, it is important to allow adjacent areas to have the option to transition to new uses that may offer supportive roles through the service sector, such as professional offices, while remaining compatible to adjacent residential uses. This transition also helps add to the number of employees and the private-sector clients who may become frequent patrons of restaurants and businesses along Main Street. Dismissive planning of support areas to Main Streets inadvertently restricts the primary destination streets from maximizing their potential in retaining the community-cherished small-town feel.*

*Existing land use regulations can be modified to provide flexibility allowing access for parking, deliveries and other utilitarian functions at mid-blocks serving the needs of the proposed new downtown general use zoning district.*

**Strategy 3:** *Have the Town consider context-sensitive designs when it is time for Town-owned buildings to be constructed so that designs reinforce the small-town feel. The architectural style of publicly owned buildings has historically provided inspiration for privately developed buildings which often mimicked many design elements to create a*

*cohesive sense of place. Large investments by the Town of Swepsonville for civic buildings can positively or negatively have a domino effect on the designs of private-sector investments in land development.*

*To successfully respond to the community's desire to retain a small-town atmosphere, the Town must dedicate resources to design structures which emulate enduring qualities expressed by the community. An example of this principal was the design for the Town of Edenton, North Carolina's new Police Headquarters building. Its design was inspired by the Town's historic cotton mill and although it served a large governmental function, the building blended in well with the surrounding historic neighborhood and instantly created a sense of pride for the Town and area residents.*

*Careful consideration will go into the preparation of design standards and specifications that reinforce the small town feel through an understanding of architectural and urban design principles that direct the placement and massing of structures. Attention will be also given to what may be considered the public realm, typically composed of streets, sidewalks, and civic spaces to help guide the Town's decision-making of details when investing in light posts, outside furniture, landscaping and sidewalk surfaces.*

**Strategy 4:** ***Incorporate a sense of small-town ambiance in public infrastructure.***  
*Details within the public realm of a town can be as important as the privately-owned buildings themselves for maintaining a tangible small-town look. When the Town of Swepsonville is tasked with selecting sidewalks, outside furniture, utility posts and even landscaping, the Town should have a pre-selected palette of elements from which to order that are in harmony with the small-town ambiance.*

**Strategy 5:** ***Give attention during preparation of the Zoning Ordinance standards applicable to downtown to address adjacent properties and streets.*** *It is important to allow adjacent areas to have the option to transition to new uses that may offer supportive roles through the service sector, such as professional offices, while remaining compatible to adjacent single-family uses. This transition also helps add to the number of employees and the private-sector clients who may become frequent patrons of restaurants and businesses along Main Street. Dismissive planning of support areas to Main Streets inadvertently restricts the primary destination streets from maximizing their potential in retaining the community-cherished small-town feel. The Zoning Ordinance can provide flexibility to allow access for parking, deliveries and other utilitarian functions at mid-blocks.*

**5.2.4.4 Objective 4: Have a good plan and ordinances so projects achieve the mission of the plan.**

***Strategy 1: Adopt Town Plan 2040 to establish Swepsonville as a successful community and a partner in the future growth and re-development of the area. Establishing a clear vision and the action steps to achieve the goals established by the Town is the first task toward a bright future. (See 8.5)***

***Strategy 2: Prepare and adopt amendments to the Zoning Ordinance establishing standards and specifications for new development and re-development consistent with***

**Town Plan 2040.** *Relevant modern development standards will establish Swepsonville as a leader in central North Carolina in proactively seeking to refresh itself into a 21<sup>st</sup> century community (See 8.5).*

**5.2.4.5 Objective 5: Adopt standards and specifications and take actions that attract new businesses within downtown with higher development and code enforcement standards to assure quality development.**

**Strategy 1:** **Ensure the Zoning Ordinance encourages investment in downtown Swepsonville.** *The Ordinance should integrate architectural design standards and enhanced enforcement requirements. (See 8.5.1).*

**Strategy 2:** **Improve way-finding throughout the Town to enhance the visitor experience.** *Local directional signage will help guide the visitor to the concentration of shopping, services, accommodations, and food/beverage businesses in Swepsonville. The Town should consider incorporating the newly designed branding into way-finding signs (See 6.8.2.2).*

**Strategy 3:** **Attract motorists from NC Highway 54 and NC Highway 87 into downtown Swepsonville.** *Use “Logo Board” (single directional sign with a grouping of company logos) advertising to attract travelers to local businesses. Provide clear concise information on special signage designed specifically to capture attention of non-local travelers.*

**5.2.4.6 Objective 6: Foster growth in local-craft businesses.**

**Strategy 1:** **Adopt Zoning Ordinance amendments with standards and specifications that respond to challenges associated with expanding and attracting local-craft businesses in downtown Swepsonville.** *Restaurants, artisan specialty shops, and entrepreneurs producing products high in craftsmanship within proximity to each other will generate interest and establish Swepsonville as a destination.*

*Ensure the Ordinance acknowledges the fiscal challenges a start-up business would have if required to develop property under the same conventional standards and specifications as a national retailer regarding minimum lot area, building setbacks, minimum parking and other site development standards.*

*Adopt standards and specifications that allow conversions of existing structures into new uses, encourage shared parking, and provides flexibility in building setbacks to respond to unique lot dimensions.*

*Adopt administrative review procedures sensitive to challenges faced by local craft businesses to improve their successful start-up in Swepsonville.*

**5.2.4.7 Objective 7: Identify shared parking opportunities for downtown businesses**

**Strategy 1:** **Future amendments to the Zoning Ordinance should be prepared that encourage shared parking in downtown Swepsonville for businesses that have different**

*hours of parking demands. The land area and cost to develop parking is a large cost of land development that could be reduced if shared parking is allowed. The Ordinance should allow rear alleys downtown that provide standards that allow businesses to provide rear parking as well as allowing shared parking with other businesses of complementary hours will be recommended.*

**5.2.5 Goal 5: PROVIDE FOR MORE NATURAL AREAS AND ATTRACT MORE THINGS TO DO!**

**5.2.5.1 Objective 1: Develop a master park and recreation plan for the Town of Swepsonville.**

***Strategy 1:*** *Explore available sites for future Town parks or expansion of existing park facilities.*

***Strategy 2:*** *Explore development of community wide greenway/natural trail system to ensure pedestrian access throughout the Town.*

**5.2.5.2 Objective 2: Explore hiring a Parks and Recreation staff to initiate a new Parks and Recreation Department.**

***Strategy 1:*** *Explore properties the Town could acquire to construct public parks. Through the development process, new park sites and amenities could be coordinated for operation by the Town. Utilizing new property tax revenues can partially fund these positions as development occurs.*

**5.2.5.3 Objective 3: Explore existing town-owned property and property the Town could acquire or lease for community events.**

***Strategy 1:*** *Explore existing town-owned properties the Town could repurpose or new property the town could acquire to construct public plazas for community events. Through the development process, new park plazas and amenities could be coordinated for operation by the Town and/or community partners. Utilizing new property tax revenues can partially fund civic spaces and a community event planning position as development occurs.*

**5.2.5.4 Objective 4: Program the installation of cohesive place-making elements throughout civic spaces to help achieve synergy among existing and future businesses.**

**5.2.5.5 Objective 5: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require new residential developments to develop neighborhood parks/recreational areas as part of the development process.**

***Strategy 1:*** *Encourage development or neighborhood parks for use by residents.*

***Strategy 2:*** *Encourage and promote linking these recreation areas through natural trails/greenway systems.*

5.2.6 **Goal 6: COME TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY!**

5.2.6.1 **Objective 1: Encourage community events co-hosted by Swepsonville businesses and the Town.**

**Strategy 1:** *Provide businesses with periodic Town support staff and resources to attract residents and visitors to Swepsonville for events (i.e., parades, Veterans Day ceremonies, holiday events, and concerts) to increase pride in the community and raise exposure to local businesses.*

5.2.6.2 **Objective 2: Plan for the development of outdoor civic event spaces.**

**Strategy 1:** *Explore properties the Town could lease for the construction of public plazas for community events. A main goal for the Town is the completion of a comprehensive master plan/study on the redevelopment of the old Virginia Mills property.*

*The repurposing of the Virginia Mills property may provide opportunities where civic spaces could be developed for community-wide events to enhance local pride, offering engaging social gatherings, share local talent and attract visitors. Refer to Goal 3 for more detail.*

5.2.6.3 **Objective 3: Identify opportunities to add parks as the number of neighborhoods grow.**

**Strategy 1:** *Explore properties the Town could acquire to construct public parks.*

**Strategy 2:** *Identify opportunities for new development to provide parks in their plans.*

5.2.6.4 **Objective 4: Pedestrian Pathways.**

**Strategy 1:** *Require developers construct sidewalks in new neighborhoods and commercial developments.*

**Strategy 2:** *Prepare, fund, and implement a sidewalk master plan so the town may start budgeting toward building a sidewalk system connecting existing and future neighborhoods to schools and town amenities.*

5.2.7 **Goal 7: KEEP CRIME LOW!**

5.2.7.1 **Objective 1: The Town of Swepsonville will explore ways to receive training in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and apply CPTED concepts to Town-owned properties.**

**Strategy 1:** *Town staff and the Alamance County Sheriff will collaborate to seek funding to receive CPTED training. CPTED is the intentional design of the physical environment in ways that reduce or remove identifiable crime risks. CPTED concepts are composed of: natural surveillance (increases visibility); natural access control (controls access); and territorial reinforcement (promotes a sense of ownership).*

**5.2.7.2 Objective 2: Town Staff will apply principles of CPTED, after receiving training, to their areas of authority to help reduce crime.**

**Strategy 1: *Town staff will promote the use of CPTED concepts while reviewing site plans of new development.***

**Strategy 2: *Town staff will promote the use of CPTED concepts by performing reviews of town-owned property and generating a prioritized list of retrofit projects, and complete them as funding allows.***

**Strategy 3: *Town staff, will offer property surveys to homeowners and businesses and provide recommendations for making changes to bring their property into compliance with CPTED concepts.***

**5.2.8 Goal 8: CLEAN UP OUR TOWN!**

**5.2.8.1 Objective 1: Enforce and strengthen property maintenance standards.**

**Strategy 1: *Enforce Existing Garbage-Related Ordinances. Enforce existing standards regarding dumpster maintenance, homeowner trash receptacles, and private garbage hauling.***

**Strategy 2: *Strengthen Property Maintenance Standards. Adopt and enforce stronger property maintenance standards in future amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.***

**5.2.8.2 Objective 2: Assign staff member(s) to monitor and coordinate roadside litter pickup efforts among participating civic and community organizations.**

**Strategy 1: *Coordinate litter pickup locations and efforts within the Town of Swepsonville between Town staff, Alamance County, NCDOT, and volunteer civic and community organizations.***

**Strategy 2: *The Town of Swepsonville should explore the creation of an “Adopt-A-Street” volunteer program within the town limits and ETJ to tangibly demonstrate civic pride, contribute to a cleaner environment, help retain and attract economic development, and serve as a reminder to the public not to litter the roadways.***

**Strategy 3: *The Town of Swepsonville will promote NCDOT’s existing “Adopt-A-Highway” volunteer program to attract participation within the town limits and ETJ.***

**Strategy 4: *The Town of Swepsonville Public Works Department will ensure garbage trucks use best management practices to reduce accidental release of litter from trucks.***

5.2.8.3 **Objective 3:** The Town of Swepsonville should hire a dedicated code enforcement officer by outsourcing to a private company.

5.2.9 **Goal 9:** **ADDRESS BUSINESSES PERMITTED!**

5.2.9.1 **Objective 1:** Ensure the types of businesses permitted and their respective development standards starting at key locations (i.e., at Town’s major entrances, along major roadways, and at Swepsonville’s main intersections): improves visitors’ first impressions; strengthens the Town’s identity as having a modern and healthy economy; and attracts customers from within and outside of Swepsonville.

*Strategy 1: The existing zoning map and the existing Zoning Ordinance should be evaluated, and where necessary amended, to ensure Town staff, property owners, interested developers, the Planning Board, and the Town Council have a clear path forward in investment and rezoning decisions consistent with the Future Land Use Map and this and other related goals, objectives and strategies. (See 8.4.1)*

*Strategy 2: As a complement to Strategy 1, ensure the types of businesses that are NOT permitted at key locations (i.e., at Town’s major entrances, along major roadways, and at Swepsonville’s main intersections), yet are valued as convenient and necessary to sustain our local economy, have options to locate at strategically planned locations to ensure their ability to locate, relocate, potentially expand, and thrive among compatible land uses. (See 8.4.1)*

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## 6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Swepsonville, North Carolina is in central Alamance County, between the City of Graham to the north, the census designated area known as Saxapahaw to the south, and the City of Mebane to the east. The county seat is the City of Graham. The Town of Swepsonville corporate limits encompasses approximately 1.4 square miles of land area and is bordered by the Haw River to the west.

The Town of Swepsonville is located in the Burlington NC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which the U.S. Census Bureau estimated had a population of 171,346 in 2020. Swepsonville is also within the larger geographic boundary of the Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point Combined Statistical Area (CSA), which had an estimated population of 1.7 million in 2020 as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. The region's population has increased in recent decades and is projected to continue within the next 20 to 30 years.

Although the Town was not formally incorporated until 1997, the area known as Swepsonville was initially established in in the late 1700's/early 1800's with a grist mill and later cotton mill, marking the beginning of the textile industry in the village. Since that time, the development of the town has inextricably been linked to events at the mill.

### 6.1 Why Focus on Economic Development

Economic development is critical to a community for two reasons: 1) to provide an employment and income base for the community; and 2) to enable a community's leadership to maintain the lowest reasonable rates for its utility rate payers and taxpayers.

Effective economic development starts with the latter. Prudent management procedures for the efficient and effective operations of both utility enterprises and tax revenue systems will ensure that all money due to both the Town and the County is collected.

#### 6.1.1 Utility Rates

Achieving low utility rates for customers of the Town always begins with proper maintenance and operations of utilities while carefully managing the expansion of such systems. Maintenance of existing systems should emphasize quality control to eliminate leaks, account for water and wastewater usage, and avoid contamination. Placing an emphasis on these important factors will provide one way of improving the return on the investment by both the Town and the County for rate payers.

Another important approach to improving the return on public investment is to carefully manage the growth and expansion of the system. Extensions should be prudently studied and examined to determine the effective advantages to the current rate payers of such expansion and ensure sound decision making. Extensions without annexation may increase utility revenue, but at the same time may expose the rate payer, and taxpayer, to financial obligations while the benefactor of the extension shares little or no risk in the cost of the extension. Exceptions should only be considered when public health is at risk and annexation is not eligible; therefore, obtaining a voluntary petition for annexation to be held until eligibility is attained can protect the Town, its rate payers and taxpayers.

A third important factor in increasing the return on the public's investment in the utility enterprises is to encourage infill development and redevelopment. Improving under-developed and under-utilized areas of existing development within the Town can increase the return on investment in existing infrastructure and contribute greatly to reducing utility and property tax rates.

### **6.1.2 Property Tax Strategy and Other Taxes Collected**

The maintenance of low property (ad valorem) tax rates always begins with the prudent and effective management of reporting and collecting the other revenue sources towns receive in order to reduce reliance on property taxes. Emphasis on effective data reporting enables the retrieval of several types of taxes already paid by our citizens and businesses every day that can easily be overlooked in the absence of effective reporting practices.

The Utility Franchise Tax is a tax on utility billings collected by electric, gas, telecommunications and cable television companies that is distributed back to the Town by the respective utility. If the utility companies do not have current information reflecting the Town's boundaries, then inaccurate reporting to the State by the utility company results in reduced distributions to the Town by the State.

State sales tax distributions to the Town are controlled by the County. The sales taxes collected and redistributed within a county may return to the Town by either population or property valuation-based formulas - determined in North Carolina by the local County Commissioners. This system is a counter-productive system in that counties often compete with towns for growth so they may keep a larger share of sales tax distributions to be shared locally. The only effective role a town may have in successfully growing its recovery of the sales tax collected by local businesses is through the careful management of the utility enterprises. Provision of stormwater, potable water, and sanitary sewer has a profound effect on the location of businesses; and towns that manage their systems with an emphasis on return on investment can improve their share of local sales tax recovered by supporting growth within the boundaries of the town.

Property taxes are the major source of local discretionary funding for routine services such as recreation, sanitation, public safety and administration. Maximizing the recovery of the taxes already collected by the state can reduce the level of taxation required of property owners.

### **6.1.3 Jobs and Economic Base**

The economic base of a community is the collective group of business activities that bring money into the Town by providing a product or service. As detailed in Section 3.5.1 of this Document, the category of "*Management, Business, Sciences, and Arts*" occupations has been the top sector in recent years bringing money into Swepsonville, followed by "*Sales and Office*" occupations.

The non-basic sectors including commercial development (driven by residential development) are typically that part of the local economy providing services and products sought by the basic sector workers and others, such as the dry cleaners, pharmacy, grocery store and repair service businesses. When "travel and tourism" is part of the

economic base, many businesses serve both purposes; restaurants are a good example because they serve both local and non-local customers routinely. “Hotels and other hospitality” businesses can serve both the tourism and corporate sector of our future economic base.



The economic base establishes a true purpose for the community. The jobs created by the basic sector businesses are the obvious direct benefit of the economic base. Jobs are critical because much of the impact of the economic base depends on how well money is distributed throughout the community, and jobs are the primary method of distribution. Automation often tends to allow economic activity to skim over the surface of a community and not have as deep an impact. One way to maximize a positive economic impact of the local economic base sector business community is to establish local relationships with companies and enterprises to provide as much local support and local resources as possible to increase distributions of wealth locally.

Increases in the value of local properties by infill development and redevelopment of under-utilized areas help lower property taxes for all taxpayers, further improving the local return on the investments made in existing infrastructure (see Section 6.1.2 of this document).

## 6.2 Current Economic Profile - Conventional Sectors

### 6.2.1 Production, Transportation, and Material Moving

As detailed herein, the largest number of the Town’s citizens in the workforce are employed in the “*Management, Business, Sciences, and Arts*” occupations, making up 34% of the workforce. The second most numerous categories are “*Sales and Office*” occupations, making up 23.4% of the workforce. (See Table 3.5.1 in Section 3 of this Document)

These occupation groups are all commercial in nature and show that the commercial sector is not only the key to Swepsonville’s success, but these sectors will flourish when given the proper business climate and innovative options to attract attention. The updating of local zoning standards and specifications, as discussed in Section 8, will improve the business community’s options for innovative development.

A healthy commercial services sector is critical to supporting strong industry; therefore, practical standards and specifications such as zoning rules and non-residential property

maintenance codes must be administered to support the sector. Standards and specifications must be updated to protect property rights while preserving natural resources and establishing reasonable standards for enhancing the appearance of all new development and redevelopment. Equally important to updating the Swepsonville development ordinances is professional administration to ensure equal and fair treatment to all Swepsonville's businesses and citizens. Proper implementation will enhance these industries and occupations, allowing them to become more prosperous.

### **6.2.2 Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance and Manufacturing**

Educational services, health care, social assistance and manufacturing have been important to Swepsonville's historic growth. These businesses represent a vital sector in Swepsonville's area economy providing jobs to many residents. *(See Table 3.5.1 in section 3 of this document for data within the corporate limits)*

## **6.3 Importance of the Infrastructure Networks**

Infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, high-speed internet, roads, railroads, and airports make up the core infrastructure for a community. These networks often seem unrelated; however, lack of coordination between these unique systems can result in poor decisions regarding land use development.

Municipal utilities such as water, stormwater, sewer, streets, sidewalks and greenways generally represent most hard structure utilities. These utilities generally are based upon the network of streets and roads.

Non-municipal services such as electric, telecommunications, natural gas and broad-band fiber generally utilize flexible conduits for their conveyances. These service providers are typically located within or adjacent to public street and road right-of-way and therefore utilize much of the same network for distribution.

Coordination among these various service providers, as well as other governmental counterparts such as the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Alamance County and other providers, is also vital to efficient operations of Swepsonville's utilities and public works functions. Conducting periodic meetings to review planned improvements and proposed developments by private development interests can often improve the level of service to all of Swepsonville's businesses and citizens by identifying opportunities for cost savings through coordination. Inclusion of representatives of these various agencies on a local technical review committee coordinated by the Town's professional planning department will reduce costs to Swepsonville rate and taxpayers.

Examples of cooperative initiatives may include provision of services for manufacturing facilities, where dual feed electrical supply, water, sewer, and a host of other functions can be coordinated ahead of time to ensure appropriate capacity is provided and corridor limitations are foreseen. Projects to consider should be evaluated based on merit to the Town's utility rate and taxpayers.

## 6.4 Existing Business Retention and Expansion

Diverse businesses including resilient job creators, specialty markets, professional services, health professionals, and food and beverage establishments supplemented by small industry, craftsmanship, and artistic endeavors (both for-profit and non-profit) will be required if Swepsonville is to refresh its local purpose in the region.

Without this emphasis, the Town risks becoming commercially stagnant.

For existing business to remain healthy and expand, it is vital that careful land use planning and the Town's Zoning Ordinance has standards and specifications that allow expansion while consciously assessing compatibility between land uses and when incompatibility exists or may exist with expansion, that business have attractive options of where they may locate within the Town of Swepsonville.

## 6.5 Tourism, Travel and Hospitality

Projects that enhance the tourism experience in Swepsonville should be considered and programmed into capital budgets over time to stimulate a continuation of new investment (both public and private) for the ever-changing tourism based industry.

### 6.5.1 Heritage Tourism

Heritage Tourism is defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic, and natural resources." It is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism and hospitality industry overall, and a major focus of the [State of North Carolina's tourism promotion](#) efforts.

Opportunities for the growth of Heritage Tourism include businesses that provide support services for artists and craftspeople. Such businesses include tool and musical instrument repair, wholesale, retail, and distribution of specialty materials used in the creative arts (weaving, basket-making, blacksmithing, pottery, woodworking, etc.), and services provided to residents and tourists such as demonstrations, guided tours, private lessons, and programming for public institutions and private and non-profit entities.

### 6.5.2 Recreation and Parks

As previously detailed in Section 4.1.2.2 of this Document, the Town has a regional park facility allowing access to the Haw River. The Town is also home to a collegiate baseball park league offering entertainment to locals and visitors.

The Town benefits from several regional parks and historic sites throughout the region.

#### 6.5.2.1 Bicycling and Hiking

As detailed in Section 4.1.2.2 of this Document, the Town has access to the Mountains to the Sea Trail (MST) through the Swepsonville River Park facility at 2472 Boy Wood Road

Currently there is over 20 miles of trail open to the public in Alamance County along the Haw River offering views of the river and its plants and wildlife, as well as opportunities to walk and hike along the river. As detailed within this Document, a segment of the

alternate MST route traverses into the corporate limits of the Town on the west side of the Haw River.

#### **6.5.2.2 Angling (Fishing)**

As detailed in Section 4.11.1 of this Document, the Town is within several recreation sites offering fishing amenities:

- Saxapahaw Lake - 6096 Jordan Drive, Graham, NC
- Town and Country Nature Park - 2999 Regent Park Ln, Burlington, NC
- Graham-Mebane Lake - 3218 Bason Rd, Mebane, NC
- Stoney Creek 1785 Faulkner Dr. Burlington, NC
- Great Bend Park - 350 Greenwood Dr, Burlington, NC
- Lake Mackintosh 2704 Huffman Mill Rd. Burlington, NC
- Guilford-Mackintosh Park & Marina – 1345 NC HWY 61 Whitsett, NC
- Stoney Creek Marina - 930 Indian Valley Dr, Burlington, NC
- Lake Cammack 4790 Union Ridge Rd. Burlington, NC

In addition to fishing activities, several of these facilities offer boat and kayaking activities to County residents as well.

## **6.6 Manufacturing**

Leadership boards of local government, both municipal and county, traditionally feel an obligation to emphasize traditional manufacturing; however, traditional manufacturing may only be a small part of the future economy of Swepsonville and most other small towns. Traditional manufacturing blends traditional manufacturing with forward thinking values of naturally sourced and locally produced materials to produce tangible goods for a value added industry.

While these traditional opportunities do exist, Swepsonville must recognize there are also pitfalls to placing all hope on ‘traditional industry’ – a sector that may inevitably employ humans to manage facilities that are designed for a specific level and duration of productivity. The reality is that smaller facilities are often the disposable ones. Larger facilities require a larger investment and typically are considered long-term commitments.

Technological innovation and globalism are fueling transformational change in both our cultural and business environments as discussed below.

### **6.6.1 Economic Transformation**

An increasingly mobile workforce is utilizing digital, web-based technology – the ubiquitous ‘mobile app’ – that enables a business owner or employee to work from anywhere.

The COVID-19 global pandemic that emerged in late 2019 and continues to persevere through mid-2022 led to many employees to remain home, at least temporarily, to help reduce the spread of the virus. Employees who were fortunate enough to remain employed while working from home replaced face-to-face meetings with computer-based meeting platforms, such as Zoom. As mentioned in an article entitled, “[What is the Future of Cities,](#)” appearing in NPR’s Planet Money on May 19, 2020, author Greg Rosalsky reported how some major companies signaled that remote work from home is here to stay. The article quotes Harvard University professor Ed Glaeser, whom Rosalsky

calls the leading scholar of urban economics, as saying that, at least in the short run, how large dense cities, having large employment centers, may suffer in the foreseeable future, while companies open small offices in more affordable lower-density mid-sized cities where employees may work remotely, once the pandemic is over.

Many jobs are no longer tied to a specific location. Anyone with a Smartphone and an idea can become an entrepreneur. As stated above, technological innovation and globalism are fueling transformational change in the cultural and business environment.

Opportunities for Swepsonville in this new economic realm are directly related to the 'quality of place' issues that are explored throughout this Plan, while recognizing tourism, crafts, and other natural resource-based sectors. When employers, innovators and entrepreneurs can choose to live and work anywhere, it is quality of place – in addition to the basics of infrastructure and support services – that is often the deciding factor.

Swepsonville has the attributes to successfully compete in this age of global commerce. The Town can glean from other proven economic development strategies and build its foundation by retaining young talent and attracting innovators from the greater region and around the country.

#### **6.6.1.1 APP Based Economy**

The 'app-based' economy isn't just creating a new digital platform for freelance work. It is spawning a host of new economic activity. For example, more than a million 'makers' sell jewelry, clothing, craft supplies and tools, and all manner of home goods and accessories through the online marketplace

#### **6.6.1.2 SHARING (or SHARED) Economy**

The well-known lodging website [Airbnb](#) and similar accommodation platforms such as [Love Home Swap](#) and [onefinestay](#) have close to a million 'hosts' in nearly 200 countries. [Uber](#) and [Lyft](#), two other mainstays in the emergent realm of 'crowd-based capitalism', are transforming how we think about transportation. Uber, which started with four people around a desk and two cars on the streets of San Francisco, is a global phenomenon, serving over six continents with well over 1,000,000 drivers.

#### **6.6.1.3 GIG Economy**

The GIG economy is part of a shifting cultural and business environment fueled by technological innovation and globalism. An increasingly mobile workforce is utilizing digital, web-based technology that enables employees to work from anywhere, so that jobs are no longer tied to a specific location. Companies such as Uber, Lyft, and AirBnB are examples of this emergent realm.

The workforce of this new 'gig' economy largely consists of freelance 'independent contractors' who can select among temporary jobs, referred to as '[gigs](#)' (hence the term), and short-term projects from anywhere in the world. Likewise, employers can select the best individuals for specific projects from a 'global' labor pool and are no longer confined to any given area.

Opportunities for Swepsonville in the GIG Economy are directly related to the speed and quality of digital connectivity and the ‘quality of place’ issues that are explored throughout this Plan.

## **6.7 Economic Development Opportunities**

Several opportunities exist for Swepsonville to re-establish a strong economic base. The following topics focus on first steps for advancing in the ‘21<sup>st</sup> Century’.

### **6.7.1 Innovation Districts**

Innovation Districts are an outgrowth of the culture and technology driving today’s economic transformation. Instead of focusing economic development efforts on isolated campuses or business parks, Innovation Districts focus on clustering start-ups and incubators in compact, amenity-rich areas (i.e., walkable downtowns, mixed use districts, etc.) where a mix of entrepreneurs work in collaborative spaces and share knowledge and resources (a staple of the ‘Shared Economy’). Existing incentive programs would be paired with a partnership of ‘innovation cultivators’ – the companies, organizations, and other groups that support the growth of individuals, firms, and their ideas. They include incubators, small business and technology development centers, community colleges, local high schools, job training firms and others advancing specific skill sets for the innovation-driven economy. The initial focus should be a future downtown ‘cluster’ of businesses utilizing available properties, beginning with development of a single ‘innovation space’, or business incubator.

### **6.7.2 Home-based Businesses**

Technological innovations make it imperative to re-examine and update zoning provisions that limit or prohibit work at home. The Town should analyze the content and impact of existing standards and specifications with an attitude toward implementation and enforcement that encourages entrepreneurship, creativity, and individual expression while protecting neighborhood residential character.

### **6.7.3 Small Business Incubator**

The Town should explore the necessary public-private partnerships and funding sources to plan and develop business incubators in available manufacturing space. The incubator’s mission would be to recruit, develop, and stimulate entrepreneurial talent in the region in order to foster economic growth, strengthen and diversify the local economy, and create new jobs. For example, a partnership-funded non-profit organization would lease (or own) a building that provides support services such as high-speed broadband internet, utilities, reception, and security, along with amenities like audio-visual equipment, conference rooms, and distance-learning capability. A collaborative effort with the community college could offer support systems such as business plan and marketing strategy development, technical assistance, funding proposal preparation, and more.

### **6.7.4 Collaboration and Regional Partners**

Economic development has been a major element of regional initiatives in recent years. All contain a host of economic development strategies to achieve the goals of job creation, talent retention, and entrepreneurship. The Town should take a leadership role

in implementing those strategies that will help the community benefit from its world-class natural and cultural resources by tapping the technological potential of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, opening Swepsonville and the region to the global marketplace.

The IRS tax code encourages long-term, private capital to invest in eligible low-income rural and urban communities, called [Opportunity Zones](#), across the United States. Currently, no portion of Swepsonville's corporate limits are within a designated Opportunity Zone. However, the southern boundary of a designated Opportunity Zone abuts the north side of NC Highway 54 along both side of the Cherry Lane intersection. The Town of Swepsonville may want to explore the benefits and process to seek designation of an Opportunity Zone within Swepsonville.

## **6.8 Economic Development *ACTION ITEMS!***

The economic development opportunities Swepsonville enjoys clearly fit into three categories. These are described as "Immediate", "Programmable" and "Opportunity".

### **6.8.1 Immediate Action Items:**

The following immediate action items should be prioritized to accomplish in earnest. These items are intended to begin producing immediate results and improve the personality of Swepsonville as a community addressing its goals.

#### **6.8.1.1 Eliminate obstacles to the goals set by the Town in this plan.**

Clearly identify opportunities and obstacles within local zoning policies to encourage business attraction, retention and expansion. Ensure walkable options for visitors requiring flexible alternatives. Establish clear signage standards to alleviate clutter and establish fairness among businesses. Establish opportunistic standards for business types in manufacturing, commercial service, and home-based business sectors to stimulate opportunity while establishing specifications for development to protect these investments, neighborhoods and the environment as mutual benefactors. Standards and specifications must be evaluated to support additional action items below.

#### **6.8.1.2 Promote Swepsonville as a "base camp" for travelers.**

Promotion of Swepsonville as a host community and base camp for individuals and groups seeking access to a variety of food/beverage choices will clearly set Swepsonville apart from other communities catering to these visitors.

#### **6.8.1.3 Promote Swepsonville as a location for modern manufacturing mated with a rural adventure lifestyle.**

Promote Swepsonville as a community for entrepreneurs of forward-thinking business enterprises seeking both a rural community and adventure (active outdoors) lifestyle setting near urban amenities.

### **6.8.2 Programmable Action items:**

The following programmable action items should be assigned to specific teams or departments to develop the ways and means to accomplish the tasks.

**6.8.2.1 Install local way-finding signage.**

Local directional signage will help guide the visitor to the concentration of automotive services, motorcycle services, accommodations, and food/beverage businesses in Swepsonville.

**6.8.2.2 Establish partnerships**

Resources for collaboration and support of economic development initiatives are not always consolidated into one neat package. The resources in North Carolina flow into communities and regions through multiple agencies. Organizing strategic interagency partnerships and participating in effective ways often becomes cumbersome; therefore, identifying the best partnerships and managing effective relationships among those partnerships should be a defined responsibility of either the Town Manager or Town Planning Administrator.

The Town should explore the necessary public-private partnerships and funding sources to plan and develop business incubators and available manufacturing space. *(Also see sections 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of this document for additional information.)*

**6.8.3 Opportunity Based Action items:**

The following opportunity-based action items will require continuous planning and forethought to recognize opportunities to act.

**6.8.3.1 Support growth and expansion of eco-tourism businesses.**

Support for growth and expansion of both existing and new businesses serving the motoring tourist with overnight and seasonal housing accommodations, RV camping (not as a permanent residence), base camp facilities, extended vehicle parking, outfitters, outpatient medical services, automotive services/repairs, and food/beverage services located within close proximity to one another.

**6.8.3.2 Establish criteria for financial participation in opportunities to expand the job and property tax base through strategic expansion of infrastructure.**

Establish clear criteria for expansion of infrastructure (broadband, stormwater, potable water and sewer systems) based upon measurable benefits and a “return on investment” business model. Criteria should also include contingency factors for public health and welfare needs when potable water and sanitary sewer needs are critical.

## 7. INFRASTRUCTURE

### 7.1 Water and Sewer Utility Systems

As previously indicated herein, the Town of Swepsonville obtains wholesale potable water supply from the City of Graham and transports its bulk wastewater for treatment through an inter-local agreement with the City of Burlington.

#### 7.1.1 Water Supply

As detailed in Section 4.1.1.2 of this Document, the Town receives its portable water from the City of Graham, specifically a 300,000 gallon per day allotment. Current average daily use by the Town is approximately 142,000 gallons (47.3% of existing allotment)

As part of the water supply system, the Town owns and maintains approximately 18 miles of water distribution lines, which are generally sufficient to meet minimum design criteria for current demand and pressure needs.

##### 7.2.3.1 Water Supply Action Steps

A report, completed by *Alley, Williams, Carmen, and King, Inc.* in 2018 estimates the average daily water demand for the Town in the year 2027 is projected to reach 0.336 (336,000) MGD (112.0% of the current 0.300 (300,000) MGD allocation).

The Town of Swepsonville will need to initiate negotiations with the City of Graham to discuss an increase in water allocation. This should also include a discussion on a breakdown of available water resources for residential and non-residential customers and a schedule for utility line improvements, where necessary. Future improvements may be needed in order to improve overall levels of service, increase system redundancy, and extend service to unserved areas.

The Town will have to formally establish policies concerning extension of utility services to developments outside of its corporate limits. Given limited water resources, it might be prudent to require annexation if utility services are to be provided to serve a proposed project.

#### 7.1.2 Sewer Service

Currently, the Town has an 800,000 gallon per day capacity allocation with the City of Burlington. Current average daily return flow to the City of Burlington is approximately 144,000 gallons per day or approximately 18% of this daily allocation. As part of this system, the Town owns and maintains a wastewater collection and conveyance system comprised of:

1. Four (4) pump stations,
2. Approximately three (3) miles of force main (i.e. pressure) lines, and
3. Approximately 15 miles of gravity sewer

The Town transports its bulk wastewater for treatment through an inter-local agreement with the City of Burlington, specifically the Town transfers wastewater to the South Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant for final treatment.

Existing pump stations and conveyance lines are generally able to meet minimum design parameters.

#### **7.2.3.1 Sewer Service Action Steps**

As noted in the Town's 2015 Capital Improvements Plan, the Virginia Mills pump station which conveys 100% of wastewater flow generated by the Town to the City of Burlington's wastewater treatment facilities has a current design capacity of 0.200 MGD and may require significant improvements within the 10-year planning window. Additional improvements may be needed in order to prevent sanitary sewer overflows, improve overall system efficiency, and extend service to unserved areas.

The Town will need to begin working with the City of Burlington to review long-term wastewater treatment opportunities and constraints to ensure there is available allocation as a means of promoting additional economic development opportunities within the community.

## **7.2 Transportation Network**

Recognizing trends and how peoples' preferences can and do change over time will enable Swepsonville to position itself as a welcoming community for multiple generations into the future. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate and remain, while aging members will choose to age in place. This can be achieved by creating and sustaining a transportation system that is successful in meeting both the existing and anticipated needs of a diverse community that multiple generations will find attractive by including transportation options and choices that are safe, attractive and convenient.

One of the most common components of the transportation network and most visible characteristics of a neighborhood is the *street*, often taken for granted even though it can change everything about a neighborhood. The street strongly influences how people behave in their community. The following questions are presented to stimulate thoughts about neighborhood streets as an example of how important this simple concept is.

- Does the street have room to pass another car?
- Does the street have room for a visitor or emergency vehicle to park in front of a home or business?
- Does the street feature ditches or curbing for drainage?
- Does the street include sidewalks along its route?

The answers to these questions clearly define the character of the neighborhood, *for example*: neighborhood streets lined with ditches for storm-water conveyance will cause people to walk in the street just to visit a neighbor, or they may even give cause for residents to choose to drive a block away to visit that neighbor. By contrast, neighborhood streets containing curbing with sidewalks set back from the curb encourage people to spend time outside to walk or play together. Streets designed properly provide a place to learn to skate or ride a bike. The street with sidewalks becomes the neighborhood's central gathering place, where multiple generations of citizens associate in many ways. The properly designed street will change the characteristics of human behavior and contribute to improved and healthy lifestyles. How many times have you

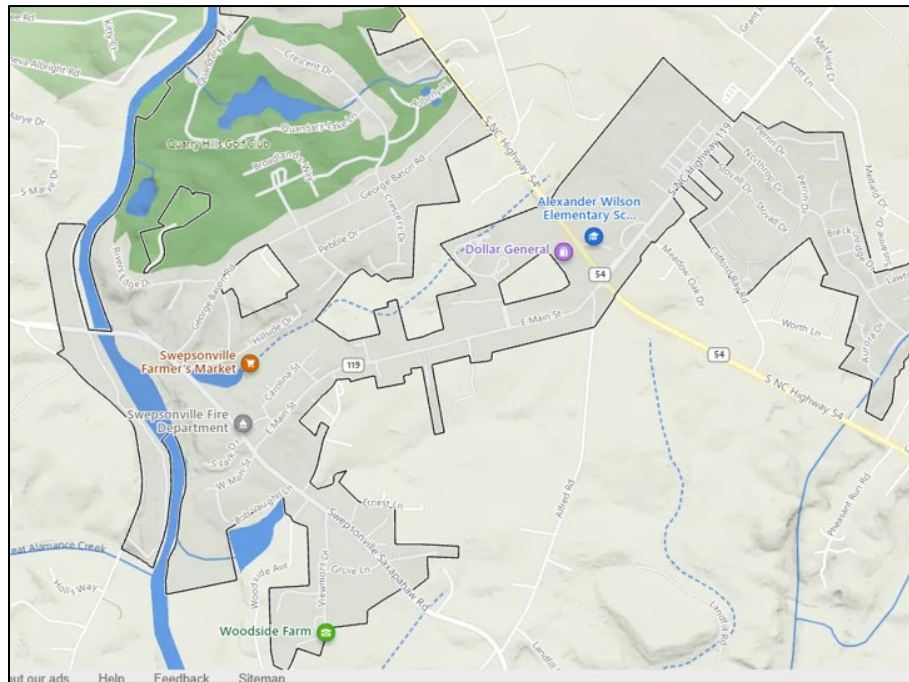
heard concerns about kids not getting enough exercise? Well, maybe our streets have not helped much with that problem. We can do better. We can improve the quality of neighborhoods in many ways.

Beyond the neighborhood street is a network of collector streets, often called arterials. These collector streets or arterials connect the neighborhood streets to the thoroughfares and highways that bring us all together. Streets also provide our principal connections to other modes such as airports and railroads. The following information about our transportation network and the actions we can take locally to improve how this network serves Swepsonville’s citizens and businesses will provide the foundation for many decisions facing the Town.

### 7.2.1 Roads and Highways

Existing transportation network supporting the Town consists of the following:

- NC Highway 54 (along the north eastern corporate limits of the Town);
- NC Highway 119 (the highway bisects the town, becoming ‘Main Street’);
- Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road (connecting with the City of Graham and the Saxapahaw area as well as NC Highway 87 to the west of the Haw River)



Source: Bing Maps

#### 7.2.1.1 Road and Highway Specific Action Steps

Areas of Town have been identified and designated on the Future Land Use Map for Mixed Use and Commercial land uses as these areas should be encouraged to be redeveloped or enhanced as vacant or underperforming properties are replaced. (See sections 8.4.1 and Figure 8.4.1 of this document.) A few of these areas should receive more in-depth

analysis of the roads and highways that serve them to identify necessary design and engineering improvements.

The intersection of E. Main Street and Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road should be studied for possible enhancement and redevelopment including pedestrian modes of transportation access (i.e. sidewalks and bicycles). Particular attention will need to be given to the location of driveway entrances to move them as far from the intersection as possible since this area may begin to experience traffic congestion if additional redevelopment activity occurs in the downtown area. This may even include installation of a full traffic signal at the existing intersection.

This intersection should also be studied with the goal to seek funds to improve safety by installing high visibility and/or contrasting pedestrian crossings.

The Town should continue to foster reinvestment and infill development in the downtown area through roadway and sidewalk improvements.

While the Town is not a member of the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO), it should continue its on-going cooperative planning efforts with its regional planning partners to address transportation impacts and needs.

## **7.2.2 Railways**

The closest rail line to the Town is the Norfolk Southern Railroad running through Burlington, NC. The Amtrack station is approximately 8.2 miles away.

### **7.2.2.1 Railway Specific Action Steps**

While the NCDOT Rail Division's [Comprehensive State Rail Plan](#) is not a financial or capital plan, it does provide a blueprint for potential future rail investments and priorities through 2040.

Rail is an important factor in economic development and is an efficient alternative to over the road transport. Other than the benefit of transporting high quantities of product, rail has some major environmental advantages.

Typically, a rail company considers many factors when examining the possibility of expanding its service through spur lines to new industrial user (i.e. location of line, location of user, shipping volume, frequency of shipping, etc.).

As part of the Town's continuing economic development efforts, additional effort/study may be warranted to ascertain the viability of expanding regional rail connectivity as there is no opportunity for a local/community connection.

## **7.2.3 Aviation**

The closest airports to the Town are:

- Burlington Alamance Regional Airport (Burlington, NC) – 9.2 miles;
- Piedmont Triad International Airport (Greensboro, NC) – 37 miles;
- Raleigh-Durham International Airport (Raleigh, NC) – 42 miles;

- Fayetteville Regional Airport (Fayetteville, NC) – 88 miles.

#### **7.2.3.1 Aviation Specific Action Steps**

The Town of Swepsonville will continue to cooperate with the County regarding assistance associated with the Burlington Alamance Regional Airport.

### **7.2.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian**

#### **7.2.4.1 Bicycle Facilities**

The Town of Swepsonville currently does not include designated bicycle facilities nor bike lanes within the Town limits.

The Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) route serves as the main artery of the North Carolina bicycle route system, bisecting the state west to east. It travels through Asheville, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Durham, and Raleigh. As detailed in Section 4.1.2.2 of this Document, there is an alternate MST route running through the Town.

#### **7.2.4.2 Pedestrian Facilities**

Currently, there are very few sidewalks within the corporate limits. As such, intersections throughout the Town limits, including downtown, do not include marked crosswalks or pedestrian cross signals. The Town's development standards do not require installation of sidewalks in residential subdivisions.

#### **7.2.4.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Action Steps**

Within the Zoning Ordinance, the Town should establish specifications for adequate street construction by developers for both bicycle and pedestrian safety. *(See sections 7.2.4.1, 7.2.4.2 and 8.5.1 of this document.)*

The Town of Swepsonville will continue to cooperate with the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MTS) regarding assistance associated with segment of the MTS that enters Haw River for the enjoyment of Swepsonville's residents and visitors. Continued and exposure to this statewide recreational route will improve Swepsonville's image nationally as we strive toward recognition as an age-friendly and inclusive community for all ages seeking barrier free environments.

### **7.2.5 Transit Service**

Swepsonville is served by the [Alamance County Transportation Authority](#) (ACTA), a reservation-based van service for general purpose and medical trips. In addition, the [Piedmont Triad Regional Council](#) (PTRC) offers transportation for Medicaid-eligible residents. Currently, the Town of Swepsonville is not served by served by the [Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation](#) (PART), a regional bus transit service.

#### **7.2.5.1 Transit Service Action Steps**

The Town of Swepsonville will continue to cooperate with the ACTA and the PTRC regarding existing transit service for Swepsonville's residents. The Town of Swepsonville should consider future service with the PART regarding transit service for Swepsonville's residents.

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## 8. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### 8.1 Analysis of Existing Land Use and Development Patterns – *Where to Begin!*

Swepsonville is not unlike many other small towns in the Carolinas in that it experienced much of its transformation during the post-World War II era when the industrial expansion led to better paying jobs and when increased automobile ownership enhanced individual mobility, while the inter-city and intra-city highway network was greatly expanded. The dramatic impact of this combination on American cities and towns was not foreseen and the problems associated with rapidly changing communities that followed led to long periods of decline in their once-vibrant core downtown areas.

The majority of existing land uses is comprised of single-family residences. Along NC Highway 54 and Highway 119 is the Honda Power Equipment Manufacturing Plant, the largest manufacturing operation in the community.



Source: Google Earth

What is known as the historic “Main Street” area is an untapped resource. While dominated by residential dwelling units, the area includes the vacant Virginia Mills property. The parcel, across from the Swepsonville Farmers Market, has frontage on the Haw River and has a lot of redevelopment potential from both a local economic and cultural perspective.

## **8.2 The Plan - *What do we want our community to be? How do we get there?***

### **8.2.1 Housing Growth**

Recognizing trends and how market dynamics can and do change will enable Swepsonville to position itself as a welcoming community for multiple generations looking at buying or renting a home. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging members will choose to remain. A community where both the new and existing home markets are attractive to future generations and allow for aging members of the community to remain in the community by offering a variety of housing products.

According to contemporary real estate experts, the "50+" real estate market is changing. In the next few years, Generation X will be joining the Boomers and Matures; serving the 50+ market will become a challenging puzzle for both communities and the real estate industry.

### **8.2.2 Commercial/non-residential Growth**

As with the housing markets, ever changing trends in consumption, product development, technology and generational shifts in personal choices/values must be considered when making decisions about commercial and other non-residential growth. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging members will choose to remain. A community, where traditional values accompany craftsmanship must embrace the presence of technology in everyday life, commerce, and business.

In order to grow commercial and non-residential offerings a community must create opportunities for success. The first step is to promote interest in both residents and visitors alike. By increasing the presence of people in commercial setting, the critical mass necessary for businesses to sustain themselves will ensure vibrancy as the tourism visitors flow into and through the community. To accomplish this, the local zoning ordinance in existence at the time of this plan adoption, must be repealed and replaced with development standards and specifications to promote refreshing internal growth.

## **8.3 Existing Land Use Issues – *Recognizing the Problems of our Past***

A plan, any plan, is only as good as the community's commitment to implement. While implementation strategies vary widely depending on the specific goals and objectives, many strategies will often include some form of incentive, motivation, criteria, or specifications for new growth, development and construction. Throughout various sections of this document there are descriptions of incentives and motivations offering opportunities for success; however, a plan can fail when the criteria and specifications are inconsistent with the plan. The following subsections describe the challenges Swepsonville faces with policies in effect at the time of adoption of this plan. The discussion continues in sections 8.4 and 8.5 of this document with insight on recommended new approaches to refreshing Swepsonville's economy and stimulating investment in Swepsonville's future. These recommended policy changes are designed to achieve the goals, objectives, and successes noted and illustrated in this plan.

As a prelude to the discussion, Jonathan Coppage, a visiting senior fellow at the ‘R Street Institute’ researching urbanism and civil society posted an article challenging leadership to re-think how we administer and regulate development. The following excerpts are from his article posted by the American Planning Association October 20, 2016.

*“Establishing by-right development and streamlining local permitting processes will allow developers to respond nimbly to market demands and will relieve the “guilty until proven innocent” status of new building development, which depresses construction starts across the country by [delaying and inhibiting](#) housing projects. What’s more, adopting leaner codes would remove obstacles to the countless smaller developers and would-be builders who want to invest in strengthening their local communities, but currently can’t afford to navigate the vast regulatory burdens and uncertain futures awaiting anyone who tries to build in America today. Trulia economist Ralph McLaughlin found that these regulatory delays may have an even bigger impact on housing production than zoning restrictions.”*

*“Main Street-style development — the “storefront on the first floor, apartments rented out above” style that forms the core of any older town’s historic center — is a residential building form that uses first-floor commercial space to serve community members and enliven a neighborhood. This low-rise density helps prop up the balance sheets of towns responsible for running utilities all the way out to suburban developments, as former city planner and engineer Charles Marohn [has repeatedly demonstrated](#). It also keeps a constant set of the “eyes on the street” that Jane Jacobs identified as necessary for safe streets; renters keep an ear out for burglars after business hours and shopkeepers keep the same at bay during the day. It is, in other words, the core of any successful town-building.”*

### **8.3.1 Utility Policies at the Time of Plan Adoption**

The Town of Swepsonville obtains wholesale potable water supply and transports its bulk wastewater for treatment through inter-local agreement(s) with the Cities of Graham and Burlington respectively. For more information on local utilities, please refer to Section(s) 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 of this Document.

Public water and sewer systems often provide the stimulus or “plant the seeds” for growth. Growth that is simply chasing utilities will result in higher rates for all rate payers and the resulting inefficiencies in other services will drive up taxes. The most effective way to keep tax and utility rates lower, increase the return on investment of the existing systems, and provide adequate revenue for the operations and maintenance of these systems is to be very deliberate in the extension of utilities. For the most part, the Future Land Use Map has been developed to focus redevelopment and new development of sufficient densities in areas where utilities already exist or are already programed to be extended.

## 8.4 Future Land Use – *Where We’re Going Next!*

The exciting aspects of this plan are not captured by the issues we’ve faced or the problems we believe we have, but the opportunities we have before us. The opportunities to build upon our previous successes are the greatest asset the businesses and citizens of Swepsonville possess. This plan recognizes those attributes, identifies the community stakeholders’ goals, and crafts a vision of our future. Along with the actions we must undertake to achieve the goals stated in this document, this plan provides the foundation for systematic decision-making by businesses, citizens, prospective investors in our community, and leadership at various levels.

Simply stated, the key to our success is to increase the population of the community by reasonable numbers in order to increase the economic activity to a level that will support the services we desire. The three groups to focus our energy on are as follows:

- Retain our young adults by creating the hometown they dream about.
- Attract newcomers by offering the dynamic small-town feel they seek.
- Encourage opportunities for our citizens to age-in-place through local options for senior living.

Creating an attractive atmosphere in Swepsonville will contribute toward our efforts to attract young adults to return, to come home when they seek that long-term location to settle into. These same investments will attract the newcomers seeking a special small-town atmosphere with lifestyle opportunities they find attractive. When a community feels good about itself it shows and that will become its greatest attribute in attracting visitors who just want to be a part of it all. That’s what successful towns do, they become special by taking deliberate steps toward that goal and they reap the rewards when they do it well.

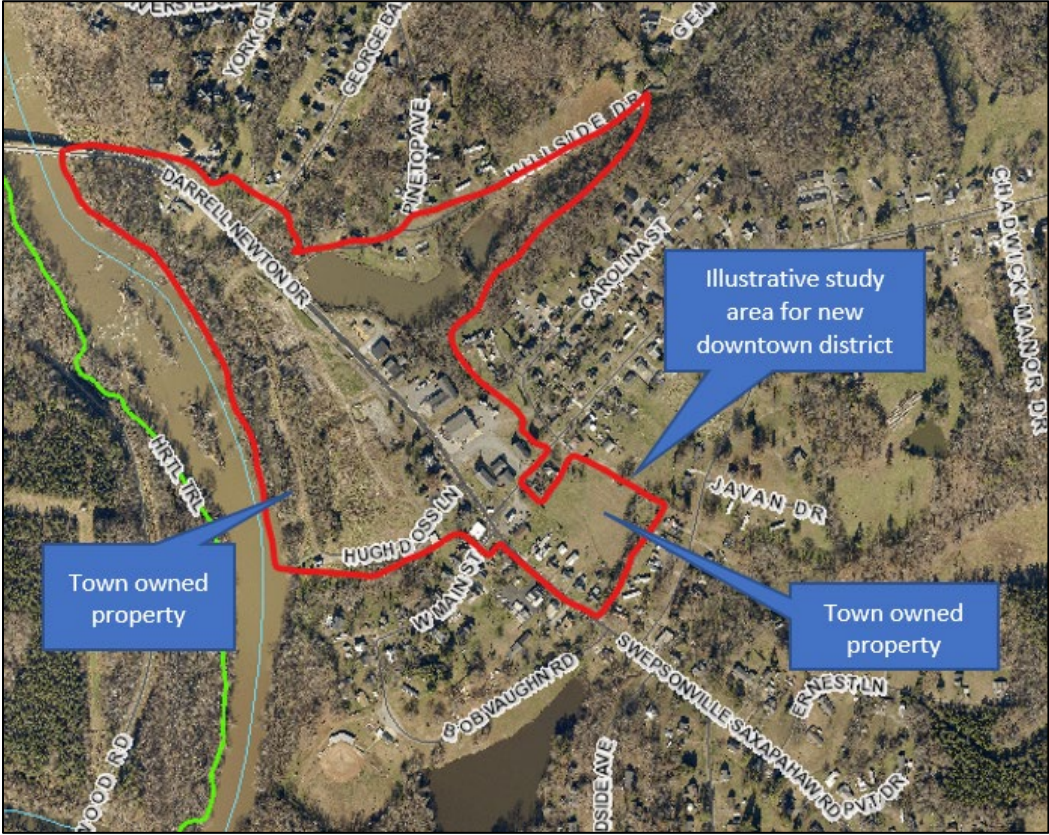
The following “steps” provide guidance for implementing the recommendations of this plan. While they are not rigid in their order, their importance is unwavering to the future success of Swepsonville in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 8.4.1 Refresh Swepsonville by Developing Underutilized Areas “Close-in” First

Focusing attention on strategic locations to reignite interest to enhance existing commercial development can boost investment by re-thinking development in the corridors. Incentives to refresh and redevelop strategic sites in existing underutilized locations where existing infrastructure and location dynamics combine to support successful new investments will reinforce property values within these strategically important locations. The ***Future Land Use Map*** appearing in figure 8.4.1 depicts a pattern of development to accommodate a combination of residential, non-residential and mixed-use growth and redevelopment. The map serves as the overall plan to guide decisions about future infrastructure investments and other public services for Swepsonville’s future growth. ***Zoning changes are required by North Carolina statute to be made based upon both reasonableness and consistency with this plan.***

**Re-defined downtown core:** As previously indicated herein, one of the recommendations of this Plan is the development of a ‘town campus’ housing government operations (i.e. administration, police, etc.) and community recreational amenities as well as expanding commercial development/redevelopment along the Swepsonville-Saxapahaw Road

(a.k.a. Darrell Newton Drive) corridor as a means of establishing a downtown commercial area within the community.

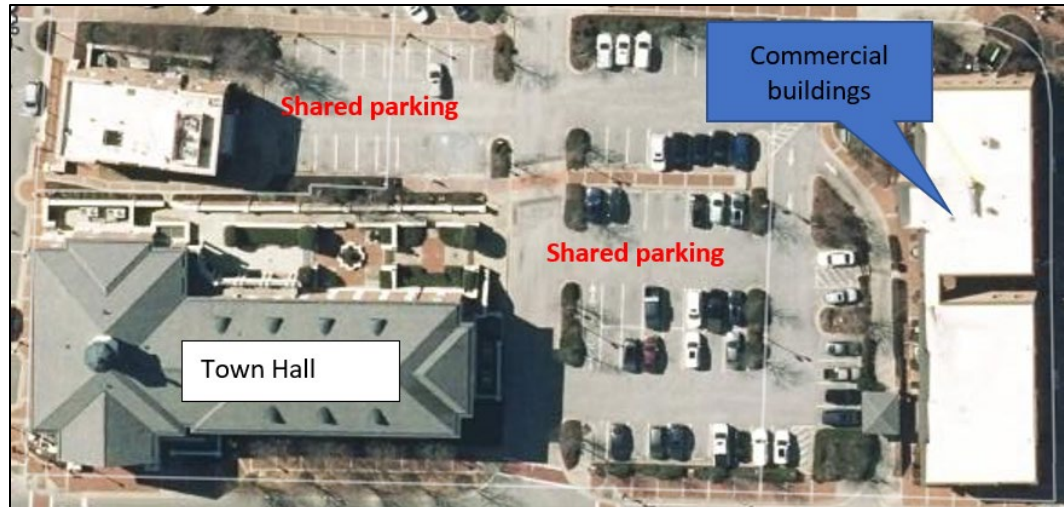


Source: Aerial photo from Alamance County GIS.

A community’s downtown area has an important and unique role in economic and social development. Downtowns create a critical mass of activities where commercial, cultural, and civic activities are concentrated. This concentration facilitates business, learning, and cultural exchange.

Swepsonville has several components of what is classically defined as a downtown area, but currently lacks the necessary land use regulation(s) and vision to bring to fruition.

The Town has an opportunity to leverage Town owned property (i.e. the Virginia Mill property and the parcel off Swepsonville Methodist Church Road) and solicit development proposals to not only develop a new multi-story administrative complex but development of multi-story buildings to serve mixed use commercial development and community recreation needs (example below).



In this example from Holly Springs North Carolina, the Town constructed a multi-story town hall administrative complex, installed sidewalks and landscaping, and shared parking area while allowing development of two multi-story commercial structures housing retail, restaurants, and professional offices. The 'town hall campus' now serves multiple community functions including a central location for parking, providing space supporting necessary economic development activities and a central location for town services.

Through the employment of development agreements, the Town can begin the process of developing a true downtown core with recreational, town service, and commercial land uses in mind. This will help address the economic and social needs of the community and be a catalyst to further development/redevelopment along the Spencer Mountain Road corridor.

**NC Highway 54 Corridor:** The Town has designated several parcels along the NC Highway 54 corridor as viable for redevelopment into Commercial/Mixed Use land uses on the proposed new FLUM. The Town envisions phasing out several existing residential land uses within the corridor in support of additional non-residential development. The Town, however, will not pre-zone these properties allowing for non-residential development thereby making existing residential land uses nonconforming. New property owners will be expected to petition the Town to rezone parcel to an appropriate non-residential general use zoning designation to allow for future development.

#### **8.4.2 Preservation and Conservation Areas**

Given Swepsonville's role in local governance in central Alamance County, our most effective tools for preservation and conservation are the moderation of growth and expansion of our municipal services and the policies governing expansion of the systems we operate. By working together with our counterparts at the county level we can stimulate investments where warranted and discourage investments in areas that will not be good for either Swepsonville or Alamance County. This approach leaves these lands completely under the control of their locally elected officials. The only time Swepsonville officials will be involved is when the topic of municipal service levels is explored.

### **8.4.3 Future Growth beyond the Town Limits**

The outward expansion and growth of Swepsonville must be guided by a combination of this plan and the information gathered when examining specific development plans and proposals in the future.

When considering growth and development proposals outside Swepsonville’s municipal limits, priority must first be given to the existing businesses and citizens, utility rate payers and property taxpayers. The following questions should be made a part of the formal consideration of request for annexation and extension of services, whether publicly or privately funded:

- Will the project contribute to the overall wellbeing of Swepsonville’s business and citizen well-being?
- Will the project contribute to the reduction of cost overall for services to current rate payers on the system?
- Will the project avoid the obligation of debt by the rate payer or taxpayer generated revenues in order to serve the project?

**When these questions are answered by a resounding “yes”, the project is likely worthy of further consideration; however, if not, the project should be avoided.**

## **8.5 Re-thinking Swepsonville’s Zoning - A Common Sense Approach!**

### **8.5.1 Planning, Zoning and Development – The Town ‘Plans and Specs’**

The traditional approach to land development ordinances in North Carolina was to adopt several different ordinances with individual topics based in the enabling legislation of the State. However, today provisions have been made to combine these varied ordinances into a single or unified development ordinance or UDO as they are commonly known. The UDO approach brings everything into one, albeit lengthy, ordinance with the benefits of consolidation eliminating the confusion over administration and procedure for the business or citizen undertaking a project. No longer would the applicant need to research separate ordinances to compile the criteria and specifications for their project. The exceptions to this consolidation or unification remain the building code governing structural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical standards plus certain state and federal mandates governing the environment.

Within future amendments to the Town’s Zoning Ordinance, the Town should accomplish two primary objectives: to modernize the Town’s criteria and specifications to meet current statutory requirements, and to make certain the criteria and specifications are designed to help Swepsonville thrive once again.

This approach emphasizes the adopted plan and then seeks to achieve the goals of the plan. Tying the Town Plan to the Zoning Ordinance not only achieves statutory compliance but transforms the role of zoning from regulatory in nature into more of a set of criteria and specifications.

This ‘plans and specs’ approach to town building improves the relationship of the Town with its businesses and citizens by establishing objectives, then administering the Zoning

Ordinance to simply achieve those objectives. By using common sense policies to encourage re-use and reinvestment in Swepsonville, the Town can reduce tax and utility rates as the plan is implemented. This approach benefits all Swepsonville's businesses and citizens.

An article published in The Raleigh News & Observer, by community columnist Eric Johnson, entitled "[North Carolina's Rural Areas Need Investments that will Draw Young People,](#)" March 3, 2020, summarized the findings of a recent study conducted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mr. Johnson works for the UNC College Board and the College of Arts and Sciences. UNC-Chapel Hill hosted a panel of scholars and pundits to determine how college students are selected and what they choose to do with their lives. The panelists' concern is that young people go off to four years of college and emerge with no sense of obligation to their home communities. Graduates collect their diplomas and move to big cities. The article notes that a student stood up at the end of the event and asked, "I'm from a small town, why should I move back?" The article's author addressed that question by stating, "...the kind of things that draw graduates back home are the kind of things that benefit everyone: a strong sense of local identity, an openness to new ideas and new people, infrastructure that encourages connection rather than isolation."

According to the article, at the same event, Zach Mannheimer of Alchemy Community Transformations gave a fascinating talk about rethinking economic incentives. He said, "North Carolina should stop trying to recruit companies and industries and instead focus on investments that recruit *people*." "What's unique about your community?" he asked. "What can your community do to incentivize more people to come here?" The article recapped the response to that question with, "That usually means public spaces downtown, art and cultural projects that puts a singular stamp on the community, and the patience to nurture small businesses instead of pining for a big corporate savior." The article ended with, "Not everyone in North Carolina is going to live in Raleigh or Charlotte, no matter how hard we try to cram them all in. If the State is going to keep growing like ragweed, we need vibrant small towns and welcoming rural places."

Another article posted online at [RISMedia Daily e-News written by Suzanne De Vita](#) on November 3, 2016 discussing a report from the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) and PwC's, "[Emerging Trends in Real Estate® 2017](#)," analyzes trends-to-come in both the U.S and Canada housing markets. Ten "gateway" markets, as defined in the report—those with both a diverse economy and "niche" neighborhoods—will stand above the rest (It should be noted that the Raleigh-Durham market has been identified as the number 7 "gateway" market in the nation). The report highlights the importance of practical zoning standards and specifications to meet the needs in today's real estate market. Ms. Vita writes: "*Both on the investor side and the user side of the market, optionality—not just one use, not just one user, not just one user profile—may be gaining favor as a way to navigate the cross-currents of volatile markets,*" the report's authors state. "*Optionality from a user standpoint allows for the adjustment of space needs to vary in terms of size, location, and use on an as-needed basis.*"

The trends discussed in the report point to a need for communities to be very deliberate in how they establish development related standards and specifications, including how

they implement such non-conventional approaches to stimulating investment in the community.

As described in section 8.3.1.1 of this document, today's businesses seek "hot spots" for business location. This clustering of complementary businesses (i.e. shopping, dining, etc.) draws potential customers to locations where their interests or needs can be met. Location economists call this agglomeration. The benefit of agglomeration to the customer is both improved choices and typically better pricing of goods and services.

The best remedy for Swepsonville's existing underutilized commercial areas is to encourage re-use and re-development through new zoning criteria and specifications. This approach can work well provided there is a commitment to areas where the investment in infrastructure has already been made. Once the Town has reinvigorated these areas, then growth beyond the current Town Limits should be studied to determine benefits for the Town's businesses and citizens.

Policies that promote the success of neighborhoods, businesses and civic uses alike are far more desirable to all persons involved; promote a more viable future of the community; and preserve the investments made by property owners in the community. This approach respects property rights in balance: the rights of one property owner, the rights of the adjacent or nearby property owner(s), and the interests town-wide linked to a vibrant community.

Black's Law Dictionary defines 'property rights' as ***"The rights given to the person or persons who have a right to own the property through purchase or bequest. These are basic rights in any society though absolute right for a property is rare in any society."***  
Law Dictionary: [What is PROPERTY RIGHTS? Definition of PROPERTY RIGHTS \(Black's Law Dictionary\)](#)

In North Carolina, and in most states, municipalities are created for the provision of services to the benefit of its businesses, citizens and property owners. The decision to reside in close proximity with others and to share in the provision of beneficial services provided by an organized local government defines the purpose of municipalities: 'to facilitate mutual benefits to those choosing to reside within a municipality'. Therefore, municipalities inherently seek to balance property rights for the mutual benefit of those affected by the actions of the individual. This compromise on the absoluteness of property rights is therefore an understanding that rules may be enacted for the benefit of the greater community. Simply stated, when adjacent property owners must lose something of value to them for another property owner to gain, then an action or decision by that individual must not be particularly beneficial to the community. These assumptions of mutual benefit, the foundation of a municipality or community, are the basis for the establishment of rules governing development and the up-keep of properties within a municipality.

The challenge becomes how well a community balances those rules with the protections of individual property rights, rather than to unreasonably suppress them.

A balanced and fair approach to the establishment of rules, standards and specifications must be the norm, not the exception. Focusing on the goals of the community rather

than restricting a community out of fear or unwarranted bias must become the established culture and philosophy when making policy. The replacement of the current ordinances governing land development with professionally administered innovative policies instills trust and support for the municipality while creating greater opportunity.

### **8.5.2 Development Agreements**

Accommodating current and projected trends require a partnership of land development and real estate industries with local government leadership. Shifts in social values, particularly among different age groups, indicate a strong propensity to consume goods and services in vastly different ways than prior years. In order to meet the expectations of what consumers' desire, land development will need to change the way it has been functioning since the 1970's. No longer do people rely solely upon the personal automobile for their daily needs. Today, generations young and old are finding new means of sharing within their daily lives as described in sections 3.6, 6.4 and 8.2 of this document. Therefore, local governments must find new ways to manage growth that is inclusive of a diverse and expectant population, development agreements are a new tool for local governments that many find effective in accomplishing new concepts.

Development agreements are a relatively new addition to the local government toolbox that has been recently modified to improve the way development specifications are established for a property. Having been authorized by the North Carolina legislature over a decade ago for the purpose of addressing larger phased developments and the need to hold entitlement to land development approvals for extended periods of time, the development agreement has opened a new avenue to creative design and town building. Section 19 of Session Law 2015-246 amended the statutes to remove the minimum size and maximum term of agreements. The changes effectively opened the window of opportunity just in time to create enormous flexibility in how new land development projects could be structured.

Today, development agreements offer a developer, landowner and the Town the ability to structure common sense approaches to projects that protect property rights and enable effective approvals and administration of projects when all sides agree. Ideally, the development agreement will not be used unwisely by local governments but will be utilized to offer higher degrees of trust. Trust, in the form of stability, eliminates concern that changes in elected local leadership will impact how a project progresses from start to finish.

The development agreement cannot substitute standards and specifications for development but can offer two substantial benefits: it can establish opportunities for participation by the local government and it can freeze zoning standards in place for the life of the agreement.

### **8.5.3 Ordinance Administration**

The Town's Zoning Ordinance must be administered by experienced professionals to ensure protection of the rights of businesses and citizens. Such fair and unbiased administration must be proactive and seek to help these businesses and citizens achieve the successes they may seek that are consistent with both the adopted Town Plan and the Ordinance.

Proactive administration includes:

- Assisting businesses and citizens inquiring about their proposal and how their ideas fit into the comprehensive plan.
- Ensuring all inquiries enjoy all the privileges of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Providing accurate and prompt information to enable the business or citizen to rely on the information in making very important decisions.
- Identifying invalid permits and determining how to administer.
- Identifying non-conforming uses (showing on map), sending letters to describe how property rights will be preserved and limits on changes to the non-conforming use.
- Meeting with Alamance County Inspections Department to establish protocol for future projects.
- Preparing a guide on the “Table of Permitted Uses” to describe 1) why so extensive, 2) why include unwanted uses, and 3) how to use.
- Providing customer service functions to include Town of Swepsonville’s Planning Administrator administering final Certificate of Occupancy (CO) following all inspections by appropriate Town staff and County Inspections.

#### **8.5.4 Stormwater Utility – *An Innovative Alternative to Reduce Development Costs***

Another way to improve the financial attractiveness of Swepsonville for new investment seizes an opportunity still in its infancy among municipalities. This approach should be considered when and if the need is deemed either beneficial to the community or mandated by the State and/or federal agencies responsible for water quality. Under State and federal stormwater rules emerging across North Carolina, local governments are often tasked with either requiring new development to install stormwater facilities (BMP’s) or requiring existing property owners of larger development to begin retrofitting stormwater BMP’s in areas that were developed prior to certain years, or both. These rules promulgated by the State and federal agencies mandate local governments to restore natural pre-development flow conditions measured in both quality and quantity when new development is approved. These requirements are very costly and often impact development feasibility in significant ways.

An innovative new alternative to these expansive (and expensive) development requirements is to approach this mandate with a new municipal utility service created in part to finance the installation and maintenance of the required retrofits and to meet the needs of both new development and re-development with common-sense solutions. With a public utility, developers can not only enjoy reduced costs up front, but localities can enjoy enhanced tax base resulting in lower taxes throughout the jurisdiction when compared to the impact upon the pattern of development the traditional alternative of individual on-site BMP’s create.

A Municipal Stormwater Management (MSM) Utility comprehensively addresses the stormwater management needs for local governments by providing such services as a municipal function. If new development projects can utilize a municipal system, the cost of development can be reduced dramatically. Traditional on-site stormwater facilities are costly and consume a certain amount of land area that may be better suited for something other than a basin, constructed wetland, or rain garden. By centralizing the treatment of municipal non-point source pollution, the taxpayers’ risk and exposure can be reduced, while offering reduced up-front cost to the developer. This logical approach stems from

the fact that the ultimate responsibility for all new development resides with the local government issuing the permits for the new construction.

### 8.5.5 Introduction of the Future Land Use Map

The ***Future Land Use Map*** appearing in figure 8.4.1 depicts a pattern of development to accommodate a combination of residential, non-residential and mixed-use growth and redevelopment. The map serves as the overall plan to guide decisions about future infrastructure investments and other public services for Swepsonville's future growth. FLUM implementation is accomplished primarily through the application of zoning, although a variety of land use ordinances are available for various aspects of implementation. A key feature of land use planning in Swepsonville is the requirement for consistency between the FLUM and the application of zoning.

The FLUM defines the location of coordinated and appropriate land use classes and is designed to accommodate a particular combination of land uses that would achieve a desired pattern of development. It serves as the primary tool for staff, the Planning Board, and elected officials during review of re-zonings to ascertain the appropriateness of a development proposal and provides the development community with clear guidance to the locations where development activity may and may not be appropriate.

The ***Future Land Use Map***, appearing in Figure 1 depicts a pattern of development to accommodate a combination of residential, non-residential and mixed-use growth and redevelopment. ***Zoning changes are required by North Carolina statute to be made based upon both reasonableness and consistency with this plan.***

There are eight basic land use categories meeting the specific development needs of Swepsonville:

1. **Rural:** Land in rural areas of the community appropriate for low intensity/low density residential development that is not dependent on urban services (i.e. water/sewer). The category further identifies lands used for agricultural production, agriculturally based businesses and related activities needing protection from high intensity development activity. As indicated, development activity is typically low intensity in nature in order to encourage preservation of agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive areas, and open space while discouraging large lot residential subdivision type developments.
2. **Neighborhood:** Identifies areas within a community where existing residential development has/is occurring at moderate to medium densities and where urban services (i.e. water/sewer) may be available. Residential development activities typically include single-family and duplex (i.e. two-family) homes and their appropriate accessory land uses. Residential neighborhoods are the dominant land use in this category, but development can include open space preservation, parks and recreation activities, and limited institutional land uses.
3. **Transitional Neighborhood:** Land use category typically located in and around downtown, providing for completion of residential neighborhoods surrounding

downtown. Land located in this category is anticipated for development at urban densities and/or intensities where urban services (i.e. water/sewer) is available.

The intent of the category is to recognize the need for in-fill development and the gradual transformation of existing development to high quality mixed density residential development supporting the central core of Swepsonville.

Higher density residential development allows a greater number of households to walk or bike, thus supporting businesses while reducing the parking demand and providing environmental and health benefits. A range of housing types (i.e. duplex, multi-family, etc.) is encouraged. Streets within the Transitional Neighborhood land use category shall be interconnected and shall typically include sidewalks and bicycle lanes providing connections to adjacent commercial and civic land uses as well as other mixed-use districts. Typically, pedestrian access shall extend into surrounding Neighborhood land use categories to help foster connectivity where appropriate. A range of housing types is encouraged. Criteria for the mix of building types establishes compatibility.

4. **Mixed Use:** The 'Mixed Use' land use category is established to provide opportunities for both compatible and sustainable re-development of both residential and non-residential land uses where underutilized commercial properties already exist as well as infill sites where site specific land planning of new development creates opportunities for businesses and various housing designs sharing community amenities and enhancements. Land located in this category is anticipated for development at urban densities and/or intensities where urban services (i.e. water/sewer) is available. Permitted non-residential land uses are designed to augment residential land uses, not detract from them.

As with the Transitional Neighborhood land use category, a range of housing types (i.e. duplex, multi-family, etc.) is encouraged. Streets shall be interconnected and shall typically include sidewalks and bicycle lanes providing connections to adjacent commercial and civic land uses as well as other mixed-use and transitional neighborhood districts. The most significant area with a Mixed Use Future Land Use category is shown on Figure 8.4.2, Growth Opportunities Map as Catalyst Area #2 at the southeast area of the Town. This area should receive additional studies in the future.

5. **Civic:** Land use category providing location(s) for educational, medical, governmental, religious, and other institutional uses. Urban services (i.e. water/sewer) are typically available and pedestrian access (i.e. sidewalks, bicycle lanes, etc.) are integral parts of development projects.
6. **Commercial:** Providing opportunities for compatible, resilient, and sustainable non-residential development with a specific focus on retail and other similar commercial land uses. The category is typically located along major road intersections, or near major transportation routes, where urban services (i.e. water/sewer) are available.
7. **Town Center:** The Town Center land use category provides for development, revitalization, reuse, and infill development of the Swepsonville's downtown area. A

broad array of non-residential and residential land uses is typically permitted enabling the needs of residents and visitors to be met. Land located in this category is anticipated for development at urban densities and/or intensities where urban services (i.e. water/sewer) is available.

Desired development pattern(s) associated with this category seeks to integrate shops, restaurants, services, workplaces, civic, educational, and higher density housing in a compact, pedestrian-oriented environment. The Town Center land use category is intended serve as defining the 'hub' of surrounding neighborhoods and of the broader community. The existing Town Center Future Land Use area is also shown on Figure 8.4.2, Growth Opportunities Map as Catalyst Area #1. This area should receive additional studies in the future.

8. **Employment/Manufacturing:** Land in areas specifically targeted for economic development activity consisting of employment centers, industrial/manufacturing land uses, distribution centers, office, service/retail uses, and flex space (typically one-story buildings designed, constructed, and marketed as suitable for use as offices but able to accommodate other uses such as a warehouse, showroom, manufacturing assembly, or similar operations). Such areas are located adjacent to interstate/major highways where urban services (i.e. water/sewer) are available. Typically, this land use category is reserved for uses requiring very large buildings and/or large parking and loading facilities for support. Small scale manufacturing and storage that is compatible with less intensive land uses are typically located within the Commercial or Mixed-Use land use categories.

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Figure 8.4.1 Future Land Use Map

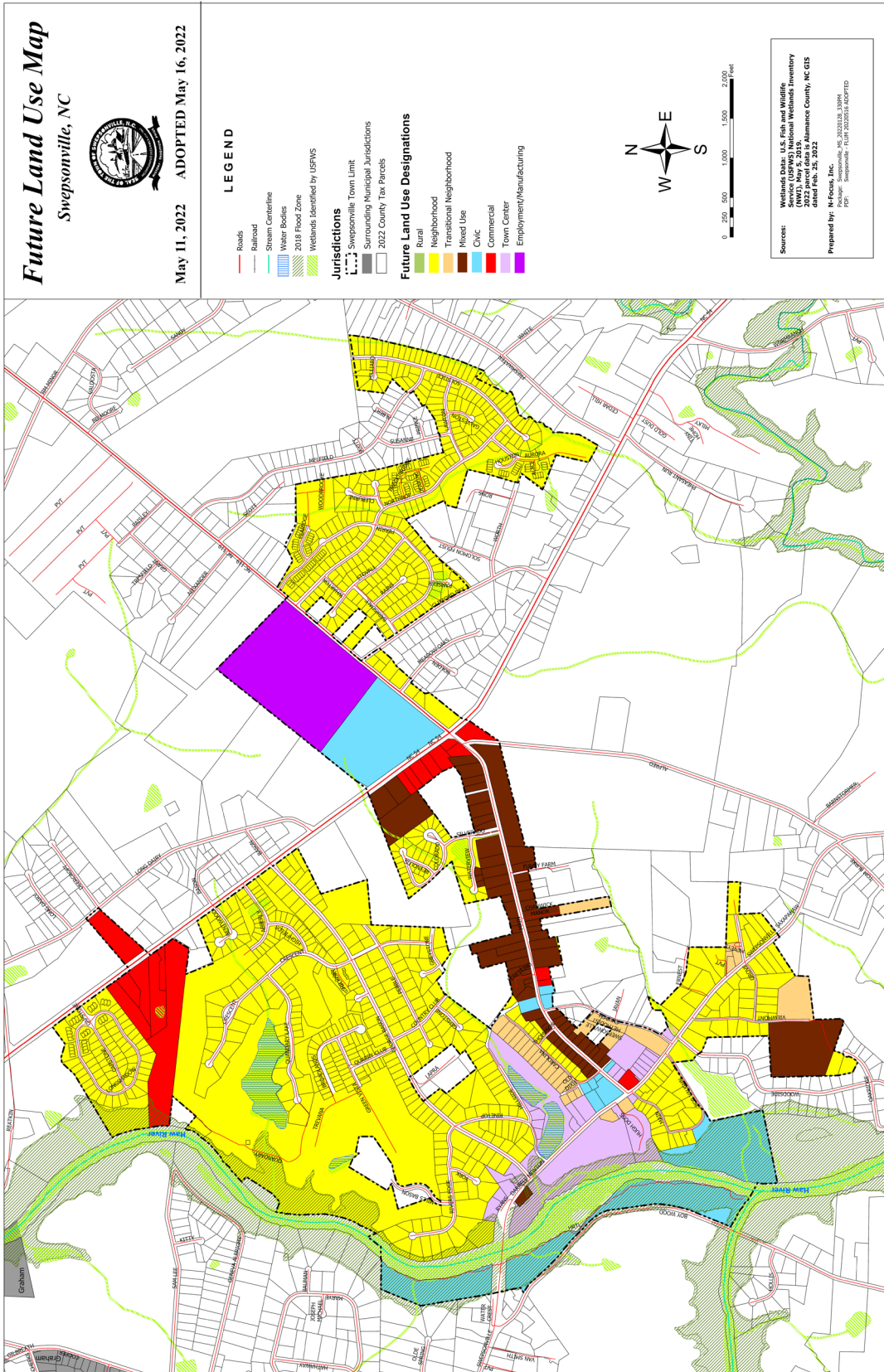
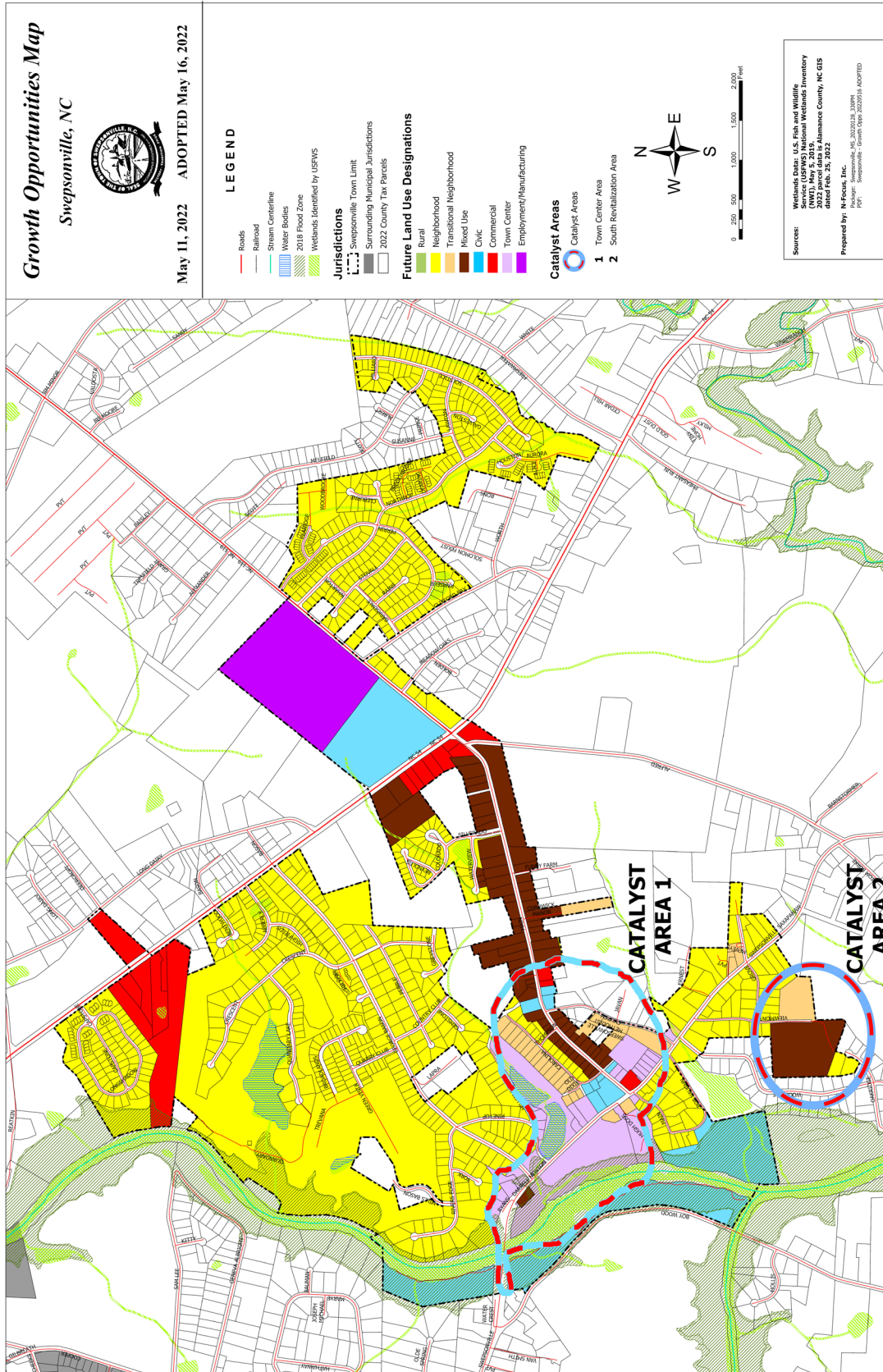


Figure 8.4.2 Growth Opportunities Map



## 9. BLUEPRINT FOR SWEPSONVILLE - SUMMARY AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### 9.1 Summary

The responsibility to implement this plan lies with the Town of Swepsonville's Town Council. Through its leadership, this plan will serve as the blueprint for refreshing revitalizing growth. The core area of Swepsonville will be strengthened, opportunity for economic success will be established, and the foundation for decision making will be provided.

The tasks associated with implementation will require a steady long-term focus on achieving goals. To identify and prioritize the many tasks associated with implementation of this plan, the following table illustrates which steps to take when, and who should be responsible. These tasks are accompanied by a range of costs for overall budgeting. Seeking partnerships to share in the risk and the reward of joint ventures will improve the success and reduce the cost to the businesses and citizens of Swepsonville.

### 9.2 Actions to Implement Town Plan 2040

The information appearing in the Action Items Table 9.2 ***Blueprint for Swepsonville: Actions to Implement Town Plan 2040*** provides a quick reference guide format for the ultimate prioritization of the actions and recommendations of this plan.

<b>Table 9.2 BLUEPRINT FOR SWEPSONVILLE: Actions to Implement Town Plan 2040</b>						
Check-off	Adopted May 16, 2022 by the Town Council and recommended by the Planning Board on May 4, 2022	Target year	Plan Reference(s)	Notes	Responsible group	
<b>ROUND 1. Getting our house in order!</b>						
A	<b>Complete comprehensive Review of Zoning and Subdivision regulations to incorporate goals/policies outlined in the adopted Town Plan</b> The Town shall complete an assessment of existing regulations and, where necessary, modify standards designed to implement the goals, objectives, and strategies of the adopted 2040 Town Plan.	Fall of 2023	5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.5, 5.2.9, 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.5.1, 8.5.3		Town Council Administration Planning Board	
B	<b>Take steps to address local infrastructure needs</b> Initiate various studies (i.e. local roadway, access management issues, utility opportunities/constraints, master planning efforts for local parks and recreation plans new downtown corridor, etc.)	Fall of 2023	5.2.1, 5.2.3.6, 5.2.5, 5.2.6, 8.3		Town Council Administration	
C	<b>Complete master planning studies of new downtown corridor and the old Virginia Mills property</b>	Spring of 2025	5.2.4.2, 5.2.4.3		Town Council Administration	
D	<b>Enforce and strengthen property maintenance</b> to clean up our town including exploring hiring staff.	Spring of 2024	5.2.7, 5.2.8, 8.5.1		Town Council Administration	
<b>ROUND 2. Reintroducing Swepsonville to the world</b>						
A	<b>Plan, design &amp; install way-finding signage</b> to direct people both into and within downtown	Spring of 2025	5.2.4.4		Administration	
B	<b>Continue to update and expand social media</b> to provide current information to the public	On-going	5.1.4.1		Administration	
C	<b>Encourage community events co-hosted by Swepsonville businesses and the Town</b> to come together as a community	On-going	5.2.5, 5.2.6		Town Council Administration	
<b>ROUND 3. Bringing a vibrant atmosphere to downtown</b>						
A	<b>Adopt standards and specifications that attract new businesses within downtown with higher development and code enforcement standards</b> to assure quality development	Fall of 2025	5.2.4.2, 5.2.4.3, 5.2.4.4, 5.2.4.5, 5.2.4.6		Town Council Administration	
B	<b>Program the installation of cohesive place-making elements throughout civic spaces</b> to help achieve synergy among existing and future businesses		5.2.5, 5.2.5.4, 8.4.1			
<b>ROUND 4. Expanding Swepsonville's contribution to the region to benefit our local businesses</b>						
A	<b>Support existing businesses and encourage additional businesses outside the downtown area</b> to complement, not compete with, downtown	On-going	5.2.4		Town Council Administration	
B	<b>Continue to work on improving access to affordable housing</b>	On-going	5.2.2		Town Council Administration	
C	<b>Adopt up-zoning of strategic properties</b> at key locations to improve first impressions, strengthen the Town's identity, and attract customers including downtown area and NC Highway 54. This effort includes initiating downtown master planning efforts.	On-going	5.2.7, 8.5.1, 8.5.2, 8.5.3	As property owners look to sell/redevelop property and developers start to express interest	Town Council Administration	